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CONCEPTUAL SCHEMAS, PERCEPTION, AND GOD

by
Joseph John Runzo

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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in The University of Michigan
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ONE

PROBLEMS AND PROCEDURE; "VISIONS"

Fundamental to this essay is the notion, for which I will argue, that the mind orders all perceptual experience; that our perceptual experiences are structured by categorization and conceptualization. A conceptual schema is, roughly, those cognitive elements of this ordering which the mind brings to experience. The following essay is an analysis of a set of interrelated conceptual problems in metaphysics which involve the function of conceptual schemas in perception and which are raised by ostensive sense perceptions of God and angels in mystical experiences. This essay will be concerned with the mystical experiences--more especially the visions--of the western theistic religious traditions, but I will concentrate my analysis of the logic of these experiences on the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. In analyzing these experiences, I will be importantly concerned with the effect which the difference in their conceptual schemas has on the experiences of percipients possessing different conceptual schemas.

I

After having a vision of God or an angel, a mystic might say, "I have just seen (or touched) God (or an angel)." One immediate and serious problem raised by such perceptual claims is that, ceteris paribus--e.g. the speaker is not purposely speaking obtusely or

attempting a queer joke--such utterances are linguistically odd within the language game of ordinary western religious discourse.

The proposition, "A New Yorker just saw Socrates dying," is for instance also odd, though not, like the mystic's claim to have seen God, linguistically odd. However, our qualms are considerably mollified in cases of this latter sort when, for example, we know that the subject has recently been viewing David's painting The Death of Socrates at the Metropolitan Museum, or has just awakened from a dream about Socrates's death. Of course, we are apt to reply in such instances, "Oh, he didn't really see Socrates dying. He just saw a painting of (or dreamed about) his death."

In contrast, though visions, as will be shown in Chapter Three of this essay, are in many ways similar sometimes to representational paintings and sometimes to dreams, non-mystic members of the Judeo-Christian and Moslem religious communities may well think that the mystic's speech is linguistically deviant even after he patiently explains that, while he was neither dreaming nor viewing paintings nor imagining things, he has had a vision and he did see, did touch, etc., God (or an angel). Mystical experiences ostensibly involving sense perceptions of God and angels have frequently been a source of uneasiness in theologians' treatments of the experience of God. And the puzzling apparent linguistic deviance of the mystic's utterances arises for the non-mystic theologian because he knows, or at least believes, that by "God" (or "an angel") the mystic means to refer to the same incorporeal being (or type of being) that, for example, Thomas Aquinas refers to in his use of "God" (or "an angel") (or, in the case of the Jewish or Moslem mystic, the same incorporeal being that Maimonides or

Al-Ghazzali, respectively, refers to in his use of "God" [or "an angel"]).

The apparent linguistic oddity of such mystical utterances as "I have seen (or touched) God (or an angel)" is due in large part both to the role of rules, as a specific type of structure of the percipient's conceptual schema, in mystical experiences, and to a difference between the conceptual schema(s) involved in more ordinary western theistic religious language games and the conceptual schema(s) of the percipient using mystical religious language games who claims to have had mystical experiences in which he had sensory experiences of God and angels.

After an initial analysis (Chapter Two) of the apparent linguistic deviance of claims to have sensory experiences of God and angels in light of the orthodox western theological position on the sense perceptibility of these incorporeal beings, the general strategy of the essay will be twofold. First, a preliminary analysis of the role of conceptual schemas in perception, including the role of rules as one element of the mind's ordering of experience, will be suggested to help clarify the logic of ostensive sense perceptions of God and angels. Secondly, besides centrally attempting to render ostensive sense perceptions of God and angels intelligible in themselves vis-a-vis ordinary, non-mystical western religious language, that analysis of the role of conceptual schemas will be refined, but only refined, to the extent necessary to help clarify a cluster of interrelated issues which naturally arise concerning the logic of these putative sense perceptions of God and angels. (Thus, for example, the contemporary debate over whether the notion of a difference of conceptual schemas

is intelligible will, instead of being confronted directly, be approached by suggesting that mystics and other religious figures who claim to have sense [or pseudo-sense] perceptions of God and angels in fact possess a difference of conceptual schemas from that possessed by speakers of ordinary, non-mystic religious discourse.)

Immediately problematic beyond the blatant queerness in the Judeo-Christian and Moslem religious discourses of claims to have sense perceptions of God and angels, is the question of what structural features in the percipient's perceptions could enable him to have any reasonable certitude in such instances that it is God or an angel (or a particular angel, say Gabriel) which he sees, touches, etc. The very linguistic deviance of the mystic's perceptual claims would naturally lead the user of the non-mystic Judeo-Christian or Moslem discourse, granting any credence to the mystic's claims, to suspect that perhaps something was seen or touched, but not God Himself or an angel itself. In Chapters Two, Three, and Four I will discuss several aspects of the problem of criteria of recognition for the personages mystics claim to recognize in visions.

Furthermore, a related problem concerning the recognition and/or identification of beings in a vision can be and is raised both from within and from without the mystics' own religious communities: Why do the percipients of visions perceive, for the most part, only beings which are accorded a divine or important religious status in the percipient's own religious community--beings which are, shall we say, uniquely "religion specific" to the religion in question? Why do Roman Catholics see the Virgin Mary and St. Francis in their visions, while Sufis perceive neither yet are likely to have visions of Moslem saints

which the Catholic mystics do not see? This fact, that percipients of visions so frequently see beings which accord with their expectations, prima facie in some measure vitiates the percipients' respective claims to have actually perceived the Virgin Mary or God or a Sufi saint. If Christ really does appear to Christians who have visions, why does this, by implication existent and divine, being not appear to Jewish or Moslem mystics? In Chapters Three, Four, and Six I will discuss the structural features of their perceptions which help explain why mystics tend to perceive entities in their visions which they had a prior expectation of perceiving.

Finally, the analysis of the logic of perception which will be offered to solve the foregoing problems will also illuminate (Chapter Six) several aspects of another problematic issue arising from purported sense perceptions of God and angels: the mystics' often stated claim that some or all of the perceived features of some visions are ineffable. How can the features of a vision be perceived yet ineffable--is that not just so much nonsense?

Answers to the questions dealt with in this essay form part of the metaphysical prolegomenon to epistemic issues like "What are the actual objects of the mystics' perceptions?"; "Are the mystics' experiences really ineffable?"; "What can the percipient infer or know about the nature of God (and angels) from his mystical experiences?"; "Can God's existence (or the existence of angels) be known or inferred from mystical perceptions of Him (them)?"; "Which conceptual schema--that of the user of mystical discourse or that of the user of ordinary western religious discourse--is epistemologically superior; which best enables the perceiver to comprehend reality?" Epistemological questions such

as these cannot be answered, or even sensibly posed, about the mystical experiences in question unless we can, if this is possible, first make sense out of the mystic claims of sense perceptions of God and angels, of recognitions of these beings during those perceptions and of the ineffability of aspects of their experiences. However, this is an essay in metaphysics concerning the logic of perception of a specific class of sensations--putative sense perceptions of God and angels--and while it does form a necessary prelude to such questions, I will not be directly concerned with those epistemological questions which deal with the plausibility of claims of knowing, or knowing about, God and angels through alleged perceptions of these beings.

II

Experiences involving putative sense perceptions of God and angels are usually designated, and distinguished, by several technical terms: "visions," "dreams" (as a type of vision) and "locutions" (or "voices").[1] In the western mystical tradition, visions can be categorized into three commonly-experienced types (Augustine was the first to make this tripartite distinction, since followed for the most part in the Christian mystical and theological traditions): (1) corporeal visions in which visionary objects are perceived by means of the bodily senses, (2) imaginary visions, in which, by means of the five "interior senses," the mystic has sensations which correspond to the sensations of the five bodily senses although the five bodily senses are not causally efficacious, and (3) intellectual visions in

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[1] "Spiritual sensations" might possibly be included here.

which it is thought there are no images and no use of either the "interior" or exterior senses despite the mystics' insistence on the appropriateness of describing the experience in terms of sensations and as analogous to sense perceptions.[2] This essay is mainly concerned with corporeal and imaginary visions.

Because the issues centrally discussed in this essay involve putative sense perceptions, I will usually be concerned with intellectual visions only insofar as they appear to involve such sense perceptions. Since in intellectual visions there is no use of sense or quasi-sense faculties, no perception of the ordinary objects of sense perception--e.g. shapes, colors--and no purported sensory "images" in such visions, it is difficult to see what distinguishes an intellectual vision from a simple direct revelation of religious truths. I will not attempt to suggest a criterion to distinguish intellectual visions from revelations but will simply point out that despite the mystics' disavowals of any imagery in intellectual visions, qualification of this disavowal suggests that at least some so-called intellectual visions may actually involve images, and thus be distinguishable from pure revelation.

In Relation 9 of her Life, St. Teresa of Avila says that she had

> an intellectual vision so clear as to seem almost imaginary [that is, as to involve images] . . . [Christ] laid Himself in my arms, as He is painted in the pictures of our Lady of

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[2]Moses Maimonides, unlike the majority of the western commentators on mystical experiences, while recognizing imaginary visions does not allow for corporeal (and also perhaps intellectual) visions. See The Guide for the Perplexed, trans. M. Friedländer (New York, 1956), Pt. II, Chs. 36 and 41 (hereafter cited as Maimonides, Guide).

> Anguish. The vision made me very much afraid, for it was so clear, and so close to me, that it made me think whether it was an illusion or not.[3]

St. Teresa not only says that this intellectual vision had the clarity of detail that she associates with images, but proceeds to say that the visionary figure of Christ was close to her and to compare it with a visual deception--an illusion. In Chapter 28 of her Life, St. Teresa says that intellectual and imaginary visions "come almost always together," and in Chapter 40 she even further conflates the conception of intellectual with corporeal visions when she says of an intellectual vision:

> I had the vision, I repeat it, but I cannot say that I saw any thing; however I must have seen something, seeing that I explain it by an illustration, only it must have been in a way so subtile and delicate that the understanding is unable to reach it, or I am so ignorant in all that relates to these visions, which seem to be not imaginary. In some of these visions there must be something imaginary, only, as the powers of the soul are then in a trance, they are not able afterwards to retain the forms . . .[4]

Here Teresa says that there are images in intellectual visions but they are seldom remembered because the percipient has difficulty understanding them. I think that the least these passages from Teresa's writings indicate is that just because a mystic--and especially St. Teresa herself--designates a vision as intellectual it should not hastily be inferred that no sense imagery was involved in that vision.

In the New Catholic Encyclopedia, "vision" is defined as a

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[3]St. Teresa of Avila, Life of St. Teresa of Jesus, trans. David Lewis, ed. John J. Burke (New York, 1911), Rel. 9:22 (hereafter cited as St. Teresa, Life).

[4]Ibid., Ch. 40:13

phenomenon "proceeding from a supernatural cause" which "does not occur in the normal development" of the religious life and "through which an individual perceives some object that is naturally invisible to man."[5] (I take it that "naturally" means "through the use of non-supernatural means": e.g. through the use of the human power of vision, telescopes, microscopes, etc.) This is not a very satisfactory definition yet it is rather difficult to improve on it. It is, for example, difficult to provide a definition of "vision" which is exclusive enough to distinguish visions from revelations and at the same time inclusive enough to subsume intellectual visions as well as corporeal and imaginary visions under this same term. However I feel that for the present purposes it will be sufficient to accept the general thrust of this definition offered in the New Catholic Encyclopedia, with the following amendatory comments, and to proceed by example, using as examples phenomena commonly accepted in the Judeo-Christian (and Moslem) tradition as visions.

In the mystic literature there are two uses of "vision": "vision" can be used (a) to denote an experience, where the recipient can be referred to as having the vision, and (b) to denote an object, where the recipient can be referred to as perceiving the vision--i.e. there is an external state of affairs, the vision, of which the percipient becomes aware. The two types of visions corresponding to these two uses of "vision" will be referred to as "received visions" and "perceived visions," respectively.

St. Teresa, for example, describes two visions of the sort

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[5] New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967, s.v. "Visions."

which the recipient has, visions which are identical with the visionary experience:

> . . . nor is there any way of effecting [this vision], whatever we may do, nor of seeing it when we like, nor of abstaining from seeing; if we try to gaze upon it--part of the vision in particular--the vision of Christ is lost at once.[6]

> I did nothing but open my eyes, to see whether I could not distract myself from the vision, but that failed to divert my attention . . . in this respect--differently from my other visions--I could not turn away from it . . .[7]

One characteristic of visions of this first type is that they will not be publicly observable phenomena. This is, though, a problematic and certainly not sufficient criterion of received visions since the mystic tradition would hold that God can choose to prevent some normal observers suitably placed in the environs from perceiving a perceived vision. Still, a vision will more likely be a received than a perceived vision when only one percipient among several suitably placed normal observers receives the vision. Perhaps, then, a received vision is described in Daniel 10:7: "I Daniel alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision."

Mystical experiences in which the vision is an external state of affairs which the percipient perceives are also common. Numerous visionary objects are only seen if the percipient looks in the correct physical place at the right time, and many visions are publicly observable events. In both cases, the visions will be visions of this second type, though again it will be difficult to assess when the latter criterion applies since several percipients could simultaneously receive

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[6]St. Teresa, Life, Ch. 29:1.

[7]Ibid., Rel. 9:26.

exactly similar received visions such that it appeared as if they were all observing the same external state of affairs. Generally, though, when several percipients have what appear to be exactly similar experiences, the vision will be a perceived vision. Hence accounts of what are probably perceived visions include the Exodus 24:9-10 record that "then Moses and Aaron, Nadad, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone . . ."; St. Gregory's statement that during one of St. Benedict's visions St. Benedict called his companions at times to show them what he was seeing;[8] the gospel accounts that Peter, James and John all saw the same vision in which Moses and Elijah talked to Jesus whose "face shone like the sun and his garments became white as light" (Matt. 17, Mark 9, Luke 9); and the descriptions of St. Francis's visions in which they are often described as publicly observable. Also, St. Teresa sometimes has visionary experiences in which the perceived object is claimed to be an external state of affairs--viz. the presence of the actual being which is the object of the vision: "If what I saw was an image, it was a living image--not a dead man, but the living Christ."[9]

The externality of the perceived state of affairs in perceived visions is more strongly indicated by the percipient's ability to visually scan the vision. Bonaventura, in his description in The

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[8]See Anton Poulain, The Graces of Interior Prayer, trans. from the 6th ed. of Des grâces d'oraison by Leonora L. Yorke Smith (London, 1912), p. 278 (hereafter cited as Poulain, Graces).

[9]St. Teresa, Life, Ch. 28:12. For similar visions in which the perceived object is claimed to be the external state of affairs of the presence of the actual object which is the object of the vision, see also Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1.

Mind's Road to God of his vision, similar to Francis's, of the Christ-like seraph, says that he understood certain truths "while looking upon this vision."[10] Julian of Norwich implies that she has a vision which is an object which she can look at when she says in her Revelations of Divine Love of her vision of the Passion that, as she gazed at a crucifix held before her, "the bleeding [of Christ] continued and could be seen by attentive eyes. . . . There were times when I wanted to look away from the cross, but I dared not. For I knew that while I gazed on the cross I was safe and sound."[11]

The locution "vision" will be used in this essay as a generic term for a mystical experience, or for the complete perceived object of a mystical experience (excepting purely auditory phenomena, i.e. "locutions" when they occur alone), which either involves (apparent) sense perceptions or involves experiences sufficiently analogous to sense perceptions for the percipient to regard it as appropriate to describe his experience in terms of sensory talk. Thus, "vision" should not be construed as precluding non-visual sense perceptions during the experience.

III

Walter Stace claims, mistakenly I believe, in Mysticism and Philosophy that among phenomena which are often confused with, but which are not, genuine mystical experiences,

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[10]St. Bonaventura, The Mind's Road to God, trans. George Boas (New York, 1953), p. 4 (italics mine).

[11]Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love, trans. Clifton Wolters (Baltimore, 1966), Chs. 12 and 19 (italics mine) (hereafter cited as Julian of Norwich, Revelations).

> the chief such occurrences to be excluded are visions and voices. Not only is this the opinion of most competent scholars, but it has also been the opinion which the great mystics themselves have generally held. They have often been subject to visions and voices, but have usually discounted them as of doubtful value or importance and at any rate as not to be confused with genuine mystical experiences.[12]

A careful consideration of the writings of the western mystics and their commentators will demonstrate that they frequently regard visions as genuine, and often profoundly significant, mystical experiences. It will become evident, I think, that it is more reasonable to regard visions as genuine mystical experiences, rather than, as Stace does, dismiss them as mere coincidental concomitants of genuine mystical experiences. Mystics do in fact generally treat visions (and voices), more than other types of mystical experiences, with a measure of caution. They do so primarily because of a fear of deception by Satan, a deception which it is thought cannot be perpetuated during other sorts of mystical experiences, and a correspondingly lesser value is usually placed on visions vis-a-vis other types of mystical phenomena. Yet, that visions are less valuable, or less epistemically reliable, than other mystical phenomena clearly does not, as Stace suggests, mitigate against their classification as genuine mystical experiences.

Stace's insistence on the absence of sense perceptions in genuine mystical experiences stems in part from his narrow categorization of types of authentic mystical experiences, a categorization which effectively precludes, and evidences an ignorance of the importance and

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[12]Walter T. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy (London, 1961), p. 47. Stace proposes this same stricture in The Teachings of the Mystics (New York, 1960), p. 11.

complexity of, what are most often regarded by the Christian mystics and their commentators as the principal higher stages of Christian mystical experiences.[13] As I hope to show, Stace overlooks the complex nature of these highest states since they often involve visions.

The issue of how to categorize mystical experiences is a complex and controversial one. For the purposes of this essay, I will use the categorization of the Unitive Life in the Christian mystical tradition, into four successive stages, which has become generally accepted in the Christian mystical tradition. St. Teresa of Avila,[14] and after her St. John of the Cross, first definitively set out these four successive[15] stages of the mystic ascent as (i) the prayer of quiet, (ii) union, (iii) ecstasy and, finally, (iv) spiritual marriage as the last and most valuable state.[16] From what I can tell, none of these four states of Christian mysticism is subsumable under either of the two categories into which Stace divides genuine mystical experi-

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[13]William James, in The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York, 1902), expresses a similar misunderstanding of these generally accepted highest stages of the Christian mystical ascent: "the absence of definite sensible images is positively insisted on by the mystical authorities in all religions as the sine qua non of a successful orision, or contemplation of the higher divine truths" (p. 54).

[14]Notably in her Life and The Interior Castle.

[15]This succession embodies both a value hierarchy and a normal temporal progression--though not all mystics have followed the usual temporal progression from the prayer of quiet through spiritual marriage, much less experienced all four states.

[16]For simplicity, I am using Anton Poulain's terminology in Graces, though Poulain designates the second stage as "full union" instead of "union." For Poulain's characterization of the prayer of quiet, union, ecstasy, and spiritual marriage, see Poulain, Graces, pp. 53-55.

ences: extrovertive and introvertive mystical experiences.[17] The latter category, under which we might at first expect the Christian mystical experiences to be subsumable, is delineated by Stace as the experience of an "undifferentiated unity," an experience which involves no experience of any difference between any states of affairs.

Without either detailing what I take to be the limitations of Stace's categorization or giving the complex characterization which he offers of each, both of which are far afield of the present issue, it will be sufficient for the issue under consideration to make three observations. First, it is precisely over the question of whether there is a third categorization of mystical experience in which an "other," i.e. God, is experienced that Stace disagrees with the earlier work of R. C. Zaehner in Mysticism, Sacred and Profane. Zaehner maintains that there is such a third category of mystical experiences--which he designates the "theistic" mystical experience.[18] It is within this third category of Zaehner's, which Stace omits, that the four stages of the Christian Unitive Life would most properly be subsumed. Second, though Stace may offer other sorts of categorizations of other sorts of mystical experiences, he should additionally recognize as genuine these four commonly accepted stages of Christian mysticism. Third, once the necessity of accounting for the four highest stages of the Christian mystical ascent is recognized, there should be some account of the fact that--and this requires some elaboration--both of

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[17]For Stace's detailed characterization of the extrovertive and introvertive experiences see Mysticism and Philosophy, pp. 78-79 and pp. 110-111, respectively.

[18]R. C. Zaehner, Mysticism, Sacred and Profane (Oxford, 1961). See p. 204.

the two highest stages of Christian mysticism, ecstasy and spiritual marriage, frequently involve visions[19] and visions are important to Jewish and Sufi mysticism. This fact requires some adjustment of even Zaehner's categorization since he precludes, more by description than by definition as Stace does, sensory experiences from theistic mystical experiences.[20]

A large proportion of visions in the Christian tradition occur during ecstasy.[21] Teresa says in her Life that visions are sometimes causally efficacious in the commencement of ecstasy:

> So exceedingly great is the power of this vision when the Lord shows the soul much of His grandeur and majesty, that it is impossible . . . for any soul to endure it, if our Lord did not . . . [throw] it into a trance or ecstasy.[22]

Marina de Escobar who, like St. Teresa, relates numerous visions which she had during ecstasy,[23] at one point refers specifically to the

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[19]Poulain states that "visions and supernatural locutions of a higher order are not usually granted, with any frequency, at least, until the period of ecstasy is almost reached" (Graces, p. 302).

Even prayer of quiet apparently occasionally involves visions. In Chapter 25:14 of her Life, St. Teresa of Avila seems to imply that she had a vision during the prayer of quiet when she says that "I never had a single vision or revelation till God had led me on to the prayer of union,--unless it be on that occasion, . . . now many years ago, when I saw our Lord": i.e. an imaginary vision which she describes (Ch. 7:11) as seeing that "Christ stood before me, stern and grave, . . . I saw Him with the eyes of the soul more distinctly than I could have seen Him with the eyes of the body." Poulain suggests (Graces, p. 228) that Teresa talks about certain quasi-visions in her discussion of the prayer of quiet in Chapter 17:8 of her Life and he notes that St. Alfonsus Rodriguez also refers to having such visions.

[20]Zaehner, op. cit., p. 32.

[21]E.g. see Poulain, Graces, Extracts from the mystical literature, pp. 266-282.

[22]St. Teresa, Life, Ch. 28:14.

[23]See Poulain, Graces, pp. 274-277.

occurrence of imaginative visions with ecstasy: "Sometimes at the beginning or the end of this rapture, God discovers certain imaginative figures to the soul."[24]

The last stage, and the goal, of the Unitive Way is spiritual marriage. Poulain argues that one of the "three principal elements" of the state of spiritual marriage is "generally a permanent intellectual vision of the Blessed Trinity or of some divine attribute"[25] and St. Teresa relates that imaginary visions occur during this state:

> When granting this favor [the experience of spiritual marriage] for the first time, His Majesty is pleased to reveal Himself to the soul through an imaginary vision of His most sacred Humanity [i.e. qua Christ incarnate] . . . [26]

Thus, visions occur during, as well as being the prelude to, the state of spiritual marriage which is the culmative stage and goal of the Christian mystical ascent.

Visions are also prominent and important mystical experiences in the Jewish and Moslem mystical traditions. With respect to the former, Stace does make an allowance for the significance of visions in Jewish mysticism and, indeed, the noted Jewish scholar Gershom Scholem states:

> Numerous mystics, Jews as well as non-Jews, have by no means represented the essence of their ecstatic experience, the tremendous uprush and soaring of the soul to its highest plane, as a union with God. . . . the earliest Jewish mystics . . . speak of the ascent of the soul to the Celestial Throne

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[24] Ibid., p. 276.

[25] Ibid., p. 283. Also, see St. Teresa, Interior Castle, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (Garden City, N.Y., 1961), Seventh Mansions, Ch. 1.

[26] St. Teresa, Interior Castle, Seventh Mansions, Ch. 2.

> where it obtains an ecstatic view of the majesty of God and the secrets of His Realm. . . . the earliest Jewish mysticism is throne-mysticism. Its essence is . . . perception of [God's] appearance on the throne, as described by Ezekiel . . .[27]

Visions are equally important in the Islamic mystical tradition:

> The importance of dreams and visions in the whole scheme of the Sufi Path can hardly be overstressed; the literature of Sufism and the hagiographa in particular are full of them, and their significance in the life of individuals and society. . . .
> A visualization of God even was possible.[28]

The general plausibility of Stace's denial that visions are genuine mystical experiences derives from one of the most consistent and universal features of western mystical writings--the claim that to advance successfully to the higher stages of the mystic ascent it is helpful to, as expressed in the Christian mystical tradition, "leave the senses and the activities of the intellect and all things that the senses or intellect can perceive"[29] (Dionysius the Areopagite), "[be] dead unto the senses"[30] (Angela of Foligno), "[withdraw] from the senses . . . [turn] away from creatures"[31] (Meister Eckhart), "crush all knowledge and experience of all forms of created things"[32] (The

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[27]Gershom G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York, 1941), pp. 5 and 44 (hereafter cited as Scholem, Jewish Mysticism).

[28]J. Spencer Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam (Oxford, 1971), p. 190.

[29]Dionysius the Areopagite, The Divine Names and The Mystical Theology, trans. C. E. Rolt (London, 1940), p. 191.

[30]Angela of Foligno, The Book of Divine Consolation of the Blessed Angela of Foligno, trans. Mary G. Steegmann (New York, 1966), p. 32 (hereafter cited as Angela of Foligno, Consolation).

[31]Meister Eckhart, ed. Raymond Bernard Blakney (New York, 1941), pp. 109 and 200.

[32]The Cloud of Unknowing, trans. Clifton Wolters (1961), p. 103.

Cloud of Unknowing), "wean your heart from the love of visible things"[33] (Thomas à Kempis), "put off the creature"[34] (Theologia Germanica), "[withdraw] the soul within itself . . . For the house of the snail is like to this body of ours; its substance represents our soul; the horns signify the two faculties of will and understanding; and the re-flexion represents our recollection. . . . [souls] by means of this re-flexion, still, and recollect, and mortify their faculties, gathering them in, recollecting them and restraining their operations, without which there can be no quiet contemplation"[35] (Bernardino de Laredo). However, such expressions are often hyperbolic and for the most part, western mystics intend such phrases as the foregoing[36] only to express (1) the idea of turning one's attention away from material objects and concerns in order, instead, to contemplate and concentrate on spiritual objects and considerations and (2) to express the notion that it is only the "higher parts of the soul"--viz. those mental capacities not directly involving the faculty of sense perception--which alone ultimately achieve an actual "union" with God. In view of these two most common usages, the admonition to "withdraw from the senses" does not by itself indicate what status visions, and other apparent

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[33]Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ, trans. Abbot Justin McCann (New York, 1957), p. 18.

[34]Theologia Germanica, trans. Susanna Winkworth (London, 1874), p. 36.

[35]Bernardino de Laredo, The Ascent of Mount Sion, trans. E. Allison Peers (London, 1952), pp. 95 and 153.

[36]Reynold A. Nicholson, in The Mystics of Islam (London, 1914), states (p. 60) that "a mental abstraction or passing-away of the mind from all objects of perception, thoughts, actions and feelings" is a definitive characteristic of fanā, which in Sufi mysticism is equivalent to the Christian mystical notion of ecstasy.

sense perceptions God is purported to bestow on the mystic, have as mystical experiences.

Even those mystics who are least interested in visions do not usually consider them worthless. Thus Eckhart admonishes those following the mystic ascent that "people are kept back from perfection by dwelling with holy pleasure on their images of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. By the same token, they are hindered by laying stress on visions . . ."[37] Here it is an excessive concentration on visions, and not visions in themselves, which Eckhart inveighs against.

On the other hand, many mystics explicitly stress the significance and value of visions. Thus, St. Teresa says that visions should not be treated with "scorn"[38] and in her Life says:

> [Certain people] advise us earnestly to put aside all corporeal imagination and to approach the contemplation of the Divinity. For they say that anything else, even Christ's Humanity, will hinder or impede those who have arrived so far from attaining to the most perfect contemplation. . . . I can well believe that anyone who attains to union and goes no farther--I mean, to raptures and visions and other favours granted to souls by God--will think that view to be the best, as I did myself. But if I had acted on it, I do not think that I should ever have reached my present state, for I believe it to be mistaken.[39]

Here Teresa makes two interesting suggestions. First, she seems to imply that visions, along with the concomitant mystical experiences of ecstasy, are more significant than the prior state of union. Secondly,

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[37] Meister Eckhart, p. 199.

[38] St. Teresa, Interior Castle, Sixth Mansions, Ch. 9. See also Ch. 8 of the Book of the Foundations.

[39] St. Teresa, The Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (Garden City, N.Y., 1960), Ch. 22. This passage is especially interesting in its direct contrast with the passage cited above in footnote 13 from William James.

it seems to me quite likely that, as Teresa indicates, many of the Christian mystics who are least concerned with visions and who tend to stress withdrawal from the senses did not in fact advance in the Unitive Life beyond the state of union: it certainly appears that many of the writers of the quasi-mystical, often non-autobiographical, mystical writings such as The Cloud of Unknowing, The Imitation of Christ, and the Theologia Germanica, which emphasize a withdrawal from the objects of perception, were ignorant of such higher mystical states as ecstasy and spiritual marriage, ignorant of just those states during which the occurrence of visions is most prevalent.

There is an obvious danger in construing the notion of "mystical experience" so broadly as to attenuate meaninglessly the resemblance between what would then be designated as the least significant mystical experiences and the mystical experiences of the great mystics. William James seems, for instance, to have succumbed to such a temptation in Varieties of Religious Experience: "The simplest rudiment of mystical experience would seem to be that deepened sense of the significance of a maxim or formula which sweeps over one."[40] I do not think that the classification of visions as genuine mystical experiences is this sort of undesirable attenuation of the central meaning of "mystical experience." Besides the general fact that visions form an essential part of numerous individual instances of the two highest stages of Christian mysticism, ecstasy and spiritual marriage, the prominence of

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[40]James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 373. St. Francis of Sales also, for instance, offers an overly dilute characterization of "mystical experience": "[Mystical] contemplation is simply the mind's loving, unmixed, permanent attention to the things of God" (On the Love of God, 2 vols., trans. John K. Ryan [Garden City, N.Y.], Vol. I, p. 275).

visions as a definitive characteristic of the mystics' higher mystical states is undeniably a salient feature of the totality of the mystical experiences of many great Christian mystics such as Angela of Foligno and St. Teresa of Avila (while, for instance, as far as we know visions constitute the whole of the profound mystical experience of the important 14th-century English mystic, Julian of Norwich). Given these facts as well as the general fact that in the Moslem, and more especially in the Jewish mystical tradition, visions are generally considered to be significant and genuine mystical experiences, whatever value is placed on visions vis-a-vis other types of mystical experiences, it is only reasonable, to my mind, to agree with Teresa that they are not mere inessential concomitants of mystical experiences but are themselves genuine mystical experiences.

Moreover, it seems to me that there is a reasonable use, and the one which I will employ, of the locution "mystical experience" within western mysticism such that the extension of this locution quite clearly includes visions. I will use the locution "mystical experience" to include minimally, experiences (in this life) in the western theistic tradition which are or include the purported perception of the nature and/or presence of God and angels.[41] (Here the perception of the

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[41]Compare this with Jean Gerson's definition of "union" and "mystical experience": "This experimental union is a simple and actual perception of God . . . We thus arrive at an exact, condensed definition of mystic theology, by saying: It is an experimental perception of God" (Poulain, Graces, p. 81). My usage of "mystical experience" is substantially in agreement with Poulain's and Dom Butler's (Cf. p. lviii of Butler's Western Mysticism [New York, 1966]). Poulain and Butler do not explicitly include the apprehension of the nature and presence of angels but, not only do I think that the claimed apprehension of angels themselves constitutes a mystical experience, but in Chapter Two I advance certain considerations which suggest that the apprehension of an "angel" is, under the appropriate circumstances, the

nature and/or the presence of God and angels is not necessarily, and in fact is not usually, sense perception.) It may well be that other sorts of experiences can felicitously be regarded as mystical experiences, but at least (purported) perceptions of the nature and/or presence of God and angels should be regarded as mystical experiences in the western theistic traditions. Visions purportedly are or provide a perception, often putative sense perceptions, of the nature and/or the presence of God and angels--and, as such, are genuine mystical experiences.[42]

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apprehension of God.

It is true that this use of "mystical experience" excludes the experience of "undifferentiated unity" which Stace designates the "introvertive mystical experience." In the first place, the type of experience which Zaehner calls a "theistic mystical experience," and which Stace omits, will be subsumed under the definition of "mystical experience" offered here. Secondly, if one wishes to regard my definition as amendable so as additionally to include, if sense can be made of it, the state of "undifferentiated unity," I have no objections. I only want at least to include within the notion of "mystical experiences" the sorts of experiences I have designated here.

[42]Interestingly, while proposing an effectually broader definition than mine of a mystical experience of God--viz. mysticism as "an immediate knowledge of God attained in this present life through personal religious experience"--The Oxford Dictionary of Church History (1958, s.v. "Mysticism") intimates that visions (and ecstasies!) are not mystical experiences, erroneously adding that "in the highest state of spiritual marriage they normally cease."

TWO

"PERCEIVING" GOD AND ANGELS

Western theistic religious figures who have mystical experiences not infrequently profess either to have actually seen, touched, etc. God or an angel, or make claims which entail that God and angels are literally sense perceptible. An (apparent) inconsistency between such claims and the conceptual structure of non-mystic western religious discourse makes these claims of western mystics linguistically deviant with respect to non-mystic western religious discourse. In order to delineate this (apparent) inconsistency, I will analyze in this chapter the most frequent and principal arguments advanced to support the theological position that God and angels are, in themselves, sense imperceptible. I will assess which formulation of the theological position prima facie contradicts descriptive reports in the mystical discourse of alleged sense perceptions of God and angels. I will conclude by suggesting a model by which we can better understand how God and angels could be incorporeal, as claimed in the western theological discourse, yet be sense perceptible, as implied by mystics' claims of having actually seen, touched, etc. these beings.

I

Consider the following celebrated visions in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. Isaiah is recorded as saying of his

dramatic encounter with God, that

> In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. . . . Woe is me! . . . for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts! Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth . . . [1]

In Ezekiel the prophet Ezekiel's even more vividly dramatic encounter with God is described:

> As I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. . . . As I looked, behold, a strong wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness round about it, . . . [he sees four angels come from the storm cloud] And above the firmament over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form. And upward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were gleaming bronze, like the appearance of fire enclosed round about; and downward from what had the appearance of his loins, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about him.[2]

The sixteenth-century mystic, St. Teresa of Avila, says of her ecstasy, since immortalized by Bernini, that

> I saw an angel close by me, on my left side, in bodily form. . . . He was not large, but small of stature and most beautiful--his face burning, as if he were one of the highest

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[1] Isaiah 6:1-2 and 6:5-7. Jeremiah, in describing how God's call came to him, says that "Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, 'Behold, I have put my words in your mouth'" (Jeremiah 1:9).

[2] Ezekiel 1:1, 4, 26-28. Ezekiel sees God in this same fashion on several other occasions (Ezekiel 3:23, 8:2, and 43:3). In the experience recorded in Chapter 8, God touches Ezekiel in a manner reminiscent of similar touches in the theophanies to Isaiah and Jeremiah: "He put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head." In other theophanies to the prophets, Amos sees "the Lord standing beside the altar" (Amos 9:1) and Micaiah "saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left" (I Kings 22:19; see also II Chron. 18:18).

> angels, who seem to be all of fire: they must be those whom we call cherubim. . . . I saw in his hand a long spear of gold, and at the iron's point there seemed to be a little fire. He appeared to me to be thrusting it at times into my heart . . . [3]

And the vision during which St. Francis of Assisi is reputed to have received the stigmata is described as follows:

> He saw coming toward him a Seraph with six fiery resplendent wings, approaching him in swift flight. [Francis] could make Him out and saw clearly that He had the likeness of a Crucified Man, and His wings were so placed that two were above the head, two were arched in flight, and the other two covered His entire body.[4]

Parallelling these experiences in the Judeo-Christian tradition are mystical experiences in the Islamic tradition about which J. S. Trimingham states in The Sufi Orders in Islam that

> A visualization of God [besides that of saints and angels] even was possible. We read in a Qādirī manual in the section describing the conditions governing the Forty-day Retreat . . . 'And if, during the course of his retreat, a form reveal itself to him and say, "I am God," he should reply, "Praise is due to God (alone)! nay rather thou art by God"; and if it be for testing it will vanish; but if it remain it will be a genuine theophany . . . in an outward form which does not contradict tanzīh bi laisa,' that is, the doctrine of 'exemption,' the wholly other, that God 'is not' in any way like His creatures.[5]

The recipient of such mystical experiences might describe his experience by saying, "I have just seen God (or an angel)," or "I have just touched (or been touched by) God (or an angel)." Within the non-

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[3]St. Teresa, Life, Ch. 29:16, 17.

[4]"The Considerations on the Holy Stigmata," in The Little Flowers of St. Francis and Other Franciscan Writings, trans. Serge Hughes (New York, 1964), p. 165. In his prologue to The Mind's Road to God, Bonaventura says that to him "there occurred that miracle which happened in the same place to the blessed Francis himself, the vision namely of the winged Seraph in the likeness of the Crucified" (pp. 3-4).

[5]Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, p. 190.

mystic Judeo-Christian (and Islamic) religious discourses such claims are linguistically odd. In the Jewish and Christian traditions, the oddness of claims of ostensive sense perceptions of God and angels has often been recognized and has been a source of uneasiness in theological discussions of mystical phenomena. (Even contemporary Christian theologians and biblical commentators often feel compelled to provide some, even if cryptic, explanation to ameliorate the uneasiness occasioned by the apparent sense perceptions of God and angels by the saints, prophets, etc.)

Augustine returns repeatedly, most notably in a long discussion in On the Trinity, to these apparent sense perceptions in an attempt to vitiate the tendency to interpret them literally.[6] In his discussion in On the Trinity of the Old Testament theophanies, he expresses his apprehension by saying that

> In the perplexity of this inquiry, . . . we must ask, first, whether the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit; or whether, sometimes the Father, sometimes the Son, sometimes the Holy Spirit; or whether . . . the Trinity itself appeared to the Fathers by those forms of the creature . . .[7]

and goes on to dismiss those who, for example, "with an over carnal mind, have thought the nature of the Word of God, . . . the only Son

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[6]See Augustine, On the Trinity, Bk. II, Chs. 6-18, and Bk. III, Chs. 10-11; The City of God, Bk. X, Ch. 13; Literal Commentary on Genesis, Bk. XII. Following Augustine's discussion, St. Thomas several times discusses the manner in which it is proper to say that God and angels are seen, principally using Moses' and St. Paul's visions as the basis of his considerations: see Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Pt. I, Q. 12, Art. 1-11 and Q. 51, Art. 2; Pt. II, II, Q. 173, Art. 1-3 and Q. 175; Summa Contra Gentiles, Chs. 47 and 51.

[7]Augustine, On the Trinity, Bk. II, Ch. 7, in Basic Writings of Saint Augustine, 2 vols., ed. Whitney J. Oates (New York, 1948). Unless otherwise indicated, passages cited from On the Trinity and The City of God will be taken from this edition.

of God, . . . to be visible."[8] In this century, Evelyn Underhill has offered a general indictment of a literalistic construal of the ostensive sense perceptions of visions and locutions:

> Materialistic piety of this kind, which would have us believe that St. Anthony of Padua really held the Infant Christ in his arms, and that the Holy Ghost truly told the Blessed Angela of Foligno that He loved her better than any other woman in the Vale of Spoleto, . . . turns dreams into miracles and drags down the symbolic visions of genius to the level of pious hallucination.[9]

K. E. Kirk, in The Vision of God, says of the earliest written Jewish reaction to suggested sense perceptions of God:

> The attitude . . . of Old Testament writers toward this possibility of seeing God was not unequivocal. Whatever experience the phrase embodied for them was hedged about with cautions and reservations. . . . an idolatrous mind might [it was thought] readily be led by the words to confound the visible place and symbols of Jahweh's habitation with the invisible God himself. Throughout the sacred texts, therefore, editors developed the habit of substituting the phrase 'appear before Jahweh' or 'be seen by Jahweh' for the phrase 'see Jahweh.'[10]

Moses Maimonides recognizes the problematic nature of the putative sense perceptions of visions in his discussion in The Guide for the Perplexed of theophanies, and epiphanies of angels, and takes an exceedingly strict view of the necessity of not understanding them literally:

> You must know that whenever Scripture relates that the Lord

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[8] Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. 8.

[9] Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism (New York, 1961), p. 267.

[10] Kenneth E. Kirk, The Vision of God (New York, 1966), pp. 11-14. Walther Eichrodt discusses, in his Theology of the Old Testament (trans. J. A. Baker, Philadelphia, 1961), the insertion of the apprehension of an intermediary for an apprehension of God by the editors of the earliest translations and paraphrases of the Hebrew Scriptures. See Vol. I, pp. 218-219. Also see the New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Theophany."

> or an angel spoke to a person, this took place in a dream or in a prophetic vision. . . . in prophetic allegories certain objects are seen, acts performed . . . all these things are only processes of a prophetic vision, and not real things that could be perceived by the senses of the body.[11]

Martin Buber perhaps best states the problem raised by ostensive sense perceptions of God and angels when, in opening his discussion in Moses of these problematic features of visions in the Jewish canonical books, he comments that

> when we are told in Biblical accounts of early experiences of God that He let Himself "be seen" by His believers (the real sense of the verbal form which is customarily translated as "appeared"), we feel ourselves bound to ask what it means; . . . an invisible God who, however, becomes visible at will. How, as what, wherein does He become visible?[12]

II

The queerness of visual, tactile, etc. talk about the experience of God stems in general from the central tenet of the Judeo-Christian and Moslem theological traditions that God is incorporeal. Even within the mystic tradition, incorporeality is recognized as a divine attribute--e.g. Pseudo-Dionysius, the fifth-century mystic and theologian whose mystical writings were extremely influential on the Christian medieval mystics, keeps reiterating the "immateriality and indivisibility of God."

Moreover, the bizarreness of claiming to see, hear, touch, taste, and smell God is compounded by two Judeo-Christian theological doctrines: the essential predication of the divine attributes and the timelessness of God. According to the former, God is not simply in-

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[11]Maimonides, Guide, Pt. II, Chs. 41 and 46.

[12]Martin Buber, Moses, the Revelation and the Covenant (New York, 1958), pp. 116-117.

corporeal: He is necessarily incorporeal.[13] On this view it is a necessary truth that if a certain being is God, that being must be incorporeal. Thus, the proponents of this view might say that just as it is incoherent to suppose that one might see the number three, it is incoherent to think that one might see God: any entity which one could see could not be God. The logical impossibility of having a temporal sensory experience of God--e.g. seeing or touching God at 2:00 p.m. June 3, 1973--is entailed by the theological doctrine that God is necessarily timeless.[14] Some mystics who have held, along with many theologians, that God is timeless include Eckhart and, as represented in this passage, Nicholas of Cusa: "Thy true face is freed from any limitation, it hath neither quantity nor quality, nor is it of time or place."[15]

Similarly, the queerness of purported sense perceptions of angels derives from the fact that angels are commonly held to be incorporeal in the technical theological tradition. Thus, as a strong representative of this position, Maimonides says in The Guide for the Perplexed that "angels are incorporeal, and have no permanent bodily

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[13]The necessary incorporeality of God is, for example, held by Anselm (Proslogium, Ch. 6), Aquinas (Summa Theologica, Pt. I, Q. 3, Art. 1), and Friedrich Schleiermacher (The Christian Faith, para. 53). The great Islamic theologian, Al-Ghazzali, also appears to hold that God is necessarily incorporeal: "God and the soul are . . . unconfined by space and time, and outside the categories of quantity and quality; nor can the ideas of shape, colour or size attach to them . . . in conceiving of the ultimate realities, God and the soul, we find ourselves in a region in which sense-concepts can bear no part" (Al-Ghazzali, The Alchemy of Happiness, trans. Claud Field [Lahore, 1964], pp. 35-36, italics mine).

[14]This doctrine is, like God's necessary incorporeality, also held by Anselm, Aquinas, and Schleiermacher.

[15]Nicholas of Cusa, The Vision of God, trans. Emma Gurney Salter (New York, 1960), p. 23.

form independent of the mind [of the percipient], they exist entirely in prophetic vision, and depend on the action of the imaginative power . . ."[16] Even religious figures who themselves claim to have encountered angels are sceptical of the possibility of having literally perceived the angel. This might be what is being indicated in the historical record of the early Christian church in Acts where it is claimed that after an angel appeared to Peter while he was in prison, and spoke to him and removed his shackles, Peter "did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision."[17]

Under certain conditions, the conceptual problems arising from putative sense perceptions of angels are not separable from those arising from putative sense perceptions of God. As Martin Buber points out, angels

> are always recorded in the earlier Scriptures without personal names, and, so to say, without personal character. They are nothing save the perceptible intervention of the God in events; which is sometimes made even more plain by the fact that they and YHVH Himself are alternately named as speakers.[18]

In the earlier epiphanies of the Old Testament, the biblical writers tend to treat the apprehension of an angel and the apprehension of God as interchangeable, identifying an angel simply as a manifestation of God, and it is only later that biblical writers consistently regard

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[16]Maimonides, Guide, Pt. I, Ch. 49 (see also Pt. II, Ch. 42). Also cf. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Pt. I, Q. 50. (Thomas holds that angels, like God, are necessarily incorporeal.)

[17]Acts 12:9.

[18]Buber, Moses, p. 39.

angels as beings distinct from God.[19] While for the most part the medieval Christian mystics regard visions of angels as visions of beings distinct from (created by) God, Meister Eckhart does come close to echoing the implicit theological position of the earlier biblical writers when he states that

> The authorities teach that next to the first emanation, which is the Son coming out of the Father, the angels are most like God. . . . the soul at its highest is formed like God, but an angel gives a closer idea of him. That is <u>all</u> an angel is: an idea of God.[20]

In cases where the perception of an angel <u>is</u> identified with the perception of God, instead of problematically suggesting that the incorporeal beings, angels, are sense perceptible, such visions will simply raise the problem of how God Himself could be sense perceptible.

All Judeo-Christian non-mystics do not, of course, subscribe to the theological position that God and angels are (necessarily)

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[19]The biblical scholar, George E. Mendenhall, discusses this identification in <u>The Tenth Generation</u> (Baltimore, Maryland, 1973), pp. 59-61. Passages in which the actions of angels and God are used interchangeably and their identification is evident include the account in Genesis 18 of the three angels who come to Abraham (whose speech is introduced by "and the Lord said"), the account of Jacob wrestling with an angel (i.e. God: "For I have seen God face to face . . ." in Genesis 32:24-30, the call of Gideon (where "the angel of the Lord" is juxtaposed with "the Lord") in Judges 6:11-24, and the angel ("we have seen God") who appeared to Samson's parents in Judges 13:2-22. Mendenhall also argues that the New Testament martyr, Stephen, identifies an angel with God in Acts 7:37-38. Eichrodt, while not proposing a distinct temporal progression from the identification of the apprehension of an angel with the apprehension of God to a later distinction between the apprehension of God or of an angel as two distinct beings, points out numerous instances of the former identification in his discussion of this phenomenon in <u>The Theology of the Old Testament</u> (Vol. II, p. 24 f.).

[20]<u>Meister Eckhart</u>, p. 141 (italics mine). The interchangeability of an apprehension of an angel and an apprehension of God is reflected in the visions, noted above, of St. Francis of Assisi and Bonaventura in which the apprehension of a seraph was identified as the apprehension of Christ.

imperceptible to the senses and neither do all mystics claim to have mystical experiences involving sense perceptions of God and angels. However, for convenience I will simply refer in this essay to the important sub-class of those in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition (and occasionally where appropriate to those in the Moslem tradition) who do hold that God and angels are sense imperceptible as the "users of non-mystical or ordinary theological religious language";[21] e.g. Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, Maimonides, Thomas Aquinas. Conversely, I will use locutions like "mystical (or mystic) religious discourse" and "users of mystical (or mystic) religious language" to denote the large sub-class of western theists who describe their mystical experiences in terms of (apparent) sense perceptions, or at least experiences closely analogous to sense perceptions, of God and angels: e.g. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Angela of Foligno, Teresa of Avila. "Users of mystical (or mystic) religious language" and similar expressions will refer to recipients of genuine mystical experiences involving apparent sense perceptions of God and angels who are not themselves mystics--religious figures such as Isaiah and St. Peter insofar as they did not actively attempt to follow the Unitive Life--as well as genuine mystics like St. Teresa. Finally, regarding what is mostly a sub-class of the users of mystical discourse, I will designate those in the western theistic religious tradition who claim to <u>in fact</u> have <u>literal</u> sense perceptions of God and angels, or who would claim that such percep-

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[21] I will be primarily, but not exclusively, concerned with the <u>medieval</u> users of ordinary theological language since they are both contemporaries with the mystics of the Middle Ages on whom I will often be concentrating and also were immensely influential in the formation and expression of the orthodox theology of their respective religions.

tions are possible, as the users of "mystical (or mystic) literalist discourse," or, more perspicuously, as the "mystic literalists."

There are two ways in which, because of the doctrines of the incorporeality of God and angels, claims of putative sense perceptions of these beings can be thought to be linguistically deviant vis-a-vis the non-mystic religious discourse. The second of the two ways is the crux of the uneasiness which these mystical experiences occasion in the ordinary theological discourse of western theism.

(i) The claims of the user of mystic discourse can be assessed strictly in themselves. It may look contradictory to the user of western religious discourse or someone outside of these religious traditions for the user of mystic discourse--say Isaiah or St. Teresa of Avila--to claim to sensibly perceive a being, i.e. God or an angel, which, it is thought, the mystic believes to be incorporeal. Such claims may appear contradictory because of the relation which the user of non-mystic religious discourse, or any non-mystic, thinks holds between perceptibility and incorporeality.

(ii) The claims of the user of mystic literalist discourse can be assessed from the point of view of an attempt to reconcile such claims with the orthodox tradition in question. In this case the user of the ordinary theological religious discourse regards figures like Isaiah and St. Teresa as orthodox members of his theological tradition who use "God" and "angel" to refer to the same beings to which he refers with these locutions. Hence he feels obliged to ameliorate the problematic nature of the claim to sensibly perceive these incorporeal beings. Here, out of respect for the saint's or prophet's important position of authority, the theologian takes the claims of sense per-

ceptions seriously. He will then try to offer an explanation of these mystical experiences which is least disruptive to the orthodox theological position while remaining as true as possible to the purported facts of the experiences.

Regarding (i), it is difficult to assess the extent to which Old Testament figures such as Isaiah and Ezekiel thought that God and angels were incorporeal. The biblical texts themselves are not as straightforward as might be hoped in this respect, to say nothing of the problems of distinguishing the actual details of the percipient's experience from the writer's expression and interpretation of it in those cases where someone else has recorded the percipient's experiences. Certain Old Testament passages can be read as indicating a tendency among the earliest Israelites to conceive of God corporeally: certainly the earliest portions of the Old Testament contain anthropomorphic imagery. W. F. Albright, though, in Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, says that by the eleventh century B.C. the Israelites had a relatively stable concept of Yahweh which included:

> the belief that God is invisible to man except under special conditions and that no graphic nor plastic representation of Him is permissible; the belief that God is not restricted to any part of His creation, but is equally at home in heaven, in the desert, or in Palestine.[22]

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[22]William F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore, 1956), p. 116. Walther Eichrodt, in Theology of the Old Testament, which was published well before Albright's book, appears to give a somewhat later date for the development of a conception of God as a non-physical being. (See Vol. I, pp. 211-212 and Vol. II, pp. 35-36.) Eichrodt suggests (1) that the common people of the "earlier period" ". . . understood the anthropomorphic expressions in a quite literal and concrete way" (Vol. I, p. 211) and (2) that the "naive and concrete" idea of God's manifestation was easily associated with theophanies given the fact that the temples of the pagans around the Israelites held statues, which had actual faces, etc., of gods. (1), as Eichrodt himself says, does not apply to the more sophisticated

Well before, then, most of those major prophetic figures whose Old Testament experiences of theophanies are of concern here, the notion of God as incorporeal seems to have been firmly entrenched in the thought of the Israelites. I will assume in this essay that, like the medieval mystic literalists, the prophetic figures such as Isaiah with whom I am concerned did believe that God is incorporeal. This assumption, together with the fact that the orthodox Christian and Moslem positions, to which the orthodox mystic figures of these traditions subscribe, hold that God is incorporeal, will be taken as implying that the mystic literalists believe that God is incorporeal.

Even if, however, the supposition that these prophetic figures believed that God is incorporeal is felt to be unsatisfactorily substantiated because of a lack of definitive evidence, alternative (ii) is sufficient to raise the issue of how figures like Isaiah and St. Teresa could be understood as in any sense sensibly perceiving God and angels while believing, and the theologian would say correctly, that these beings are incorporeal. Further, there is good reason to think that (ii) is in fact the motivating reason for the concern in the ordi-

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religious leaders. It is such leaders who experienced the theophanies with which this essay is concerned. Regarding (2), Professor George Mendenhall has indicated in conversation that the pagans in the area would not have thought of their gods as corporeal, and thus the Israelites could not have borrowed the notion of a corporeal deity from them, and in general, Mendenhall agrees with Albright's assessment that very early the Israelites conceived of God as incorporeal. (For a discussion of the radical break of the Israelite from other ancient Near East conceptions of the deaity see G. E. Wright, The Old Testament Against Its Environment [Chicago, 1950], pp. 20-29.) In any event, Eichrodt thinks that the notion that God is not corporeal was prevalent by the time of the major prophetic figures with whose theophanic experiences this essay is concerned. (See e.g. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. II, p. 21.)

nary theological discourse to account for the claims of orthodox figures to sensibly perceive God and angels.

This is clearly Augustine's reason for so extensively discussing the appearances of God and angels to men.[23] In the passage cited above[24] from Moses, Martin Buber says that "we feel ourselves bound to ask . . . [how] an invisible God . . . becomes visible at will" when "we are told in Biblical accounts of early experiences of God that He let Himself 'be seen' . . ." It is not intellectual curiosity which motivates Buber's query. I think it is clear that he assumes that these early Biblical accounts refer to the same incorporeal deity he calls "God" and, taking their religious authority seriously, feels obligated, "bound," to explain their puzzling experiences. Similarly, Dionysius the Areopagite says:

> The sacred writers . . . have [sometimes] gained their images from certain heavenly visions . . . and . . . have clothed [the superluminous nameless Goodness] in human (fiery or amber) shapes or forms, and have spoken of Its Eyes, and Ears, and Hair, and Face, and Hands, and Wings, and Feathers, and Arms, and Back Parts, and Feet; . . . Only we must have a care lest, in expounding these different forms and figures we unwittingly confound the incorporeal meaning of the Divine Names with the terms of the sensible symbols.[25]

Again, Dionysius is concerned to explain the religiously important accounts of the "sacred writers," because he assumes that they were (symbolically, he concludes) referring to the incorporeal being, God.

Given this concern in the theological discourse to assimilate the authoritative biblical accounts (and, e.g., later accounts by the

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[23]Consider Augustine, On the Trinity, Bk. II, Ch. 7 and the following chapters.

[24]P. 29.

[25]Dionysius the Areopagite, The Divine Names, pp. 63 and 165.

saints) of putative sense perceptions of God and angels with the orthodox theological position, the linguistic deviance of these accounts needs to be analyzed through an analysis of the orthodox theological conception of the conceptual relationship between incorporeality and sense perceptibility. This analysis will be made against the background in the theological discourse of providing an acceptable explanation of these experiences, least disruptive to orthodox theology, while remaining as faithful as possible to the reported facts of the mystical experiences.

III

Before turning to the position taken in the theological discourse on the relation between God's and angels' incorporeality and their sense imperceptibility, the term "sense imperceptible" should be clarified and one common theological objection to the possibility of sensibly perceiving God which is not directly related to His incorporeality briefly discussed. There is an ambiguity in the terms "sense perceptible" and "sense imperceptible": there are two ways in which God and angels can be said to be sense imperceptible. Either these beings are sense imperceptible because they are not perceptible by means of the normal operation of the five senses (and perhaps of the five interior senses also) or, more fundamentally, they are sense imperceptible because no act of perception of the proper objects of the five external (or the interior) senses--e.g. colors, shapes, timbres, tastes, etc.--can be a genuine perception of God or of an angel. The first type of claimed sense imperceptibility of these celestial beings, and the second if reworded "they are sense imperceptible

tible because no normal act of perception of the proper objects of the five external (or interior) senses can be a genuine perception of God or an angel," can be construed as a claim about matters of fact or as a proposition about the logic of perception. I am primarily concerned in this essay with the (apparent) logical contradictions between theological and mystical literalist religious and perceptual discourse, the contradictions which make mystic literalist discourse linguistically deviant vis-a-vis ordinary theological religious language; I am not directly concerned with whatever factual considerations[26] might be advanced to support the notion that human sense reception mechanisms are unable (at least in this life) to convey genuine sense impressions of God and angels or to support the notion that images or sense qualities are unable to provide adequate data for genuine sense perceptions of God and angels. Empirical considerations of this kind would, if correct, merely show that the users of mystic literalist discourse make false claims about the actuality, or causal possibility, of sense perceptions of God and angels.

Taking, then, the two senses of "sense imperceptibility" as logical claims about the logic of perception, it is clear that the supposition that it is logically impossible to perceive God and angels through the operation of the five senses (or the five interior senses) is logically posterior to the supposition that it is logically impossible that the proper objects of sense perception could provide an adequate basis for a genuine perception of these beings. If it is

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[26] St. Francis of Sales, for example, argues on factual grounds in On the Love of God against the sense perceptibility of God (Bk. 3, Ch. 14).

logically impossible for sense reception mechanisms to provide genuine perceptions of God and angels, it will be because of the kind of information which sense receptors provide, because that information is logically inadequate for a genuine perception of these celestial beings. Therefore, I will concentrate on explicating reasons theologians have offered for the claim that the proper objects of sense perception logically cannot provide the data for a genuine perception of God or of an angel, reasons from which it follows, a fortiori, that it is logically impossible for sense reception mechanisms to provide a genuine perception of God or of an angel.

As the theological objections to the possibility of sense perceptions of God and angels are discussed, it should be remembered that under certain conditions the apprehension of an angel is identified with the apprehension of God. Under those conditions, and insofar as that identification holds, theological arguments against specifically only either the sense imperceptibility of God or of angels will apply equally to both God and angels.

Turn briefly then to one such argument for God's sense imperceptibility which does not involve God's incorporeality. Although theological objections to the possibility of sensibly perceiving God mainly stem from the doctrine of His incorporeality, it has also been held that God's infinitude entails His sense imperceptibility.

Maimonides, discussing Ezekiel's visions of God, says that "all the figures of this vision refer to the glory of the Lord, and to the chariot, and not to Him who rides upon the chariot; for God cannot be compared to anything." The writers of the Zohar, the central literary work of the Kabbalah, take a somewhat similar position:

> He [God] designates himself eyn sof, the Infinite. Neither shape nor form has he, and no vessel exists to contain him, nor any means to apprehend him.[27]

William of St. Thierry, the mystical writer and Cistercian contemporary at Clairvaux of St. Bernard, argues in his Exposition on the Song of Songs that the knowledge of God is only given through "enlightened love" and not through the senses or intellect and says that

> In the common knowledge of things, the imagination of them [by means of phantasms] seems to accomplish this [the knowledge] in the memory of the knower. But the sublimity of the divine nature causes a vast unlikeness between the image impressed in the mind and the Reality, because the likeness becomes inferior inasmuch as it is in an inferior nature, and the more unlike inasmuch as it is in an unlike substance--that is, the likeness of the Creator in the creature and of God in the soul.[28]

Here William of St. Thierry and, more perspicuously, Maimonides and the writers of the Zohar, argue that God is sense imperceptible because sense qualities and images cannot adequately convey aspects of the infinitude of God.

Regarded as a line of objection to mystic literalist assertions of sense perceptions of God, this reasoning will fail. The mystic literalist assertion that God Himself is perceived by means of sense or sense-like perceptions is compatible with the idea that God is not perceptible in His entirety or completely knowable by means of sense or pseudo-sense perceptions (or, for that matter, by any means by a created intellect). Judeo-Christian mystics readily concede that God is ultimately incomprehensible and that His nature exceeds in complex-

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[27] Zohar, ed. Gershom G. Scholem (New York, 1963), p. 79.

[28] William of St. Thierry, Exposition on the Song of Songs, in The Works of William of St. Thierry (Ireland, 1970), Vol. I, p. 16. Nicholas of Cusa holds a similar position in The Vision of God (p. 23).

ity and quality the limitations of sense perception, and they do not themselves profess any complete knowledge of His infinite nature.

IV

The basic conflict between the users of mystic literalist and users of ordinary theological language arises from the general position in the theological discourse which can be formulated as follows:

P_1 Since God and angels are incorporeal they are logically imperceptible by means of sense qualities and images.

The term "logically" in the locution "logically imperceptible" and other similar locutions in this essay, is only meant to function as a device to make it clear that the modality involved is logical and not causal and is neither intended as an iterated modality nor as indicating any particular treatment of iterated modalities. P_1 can be restated as the position that since God and angels are incorporeal, sense qualities and images are logically inadequate for the conveyance of a genuine perception of God or of an angel.

The centrality of the doctrine of the incorporeality of God and angels in the Jewish, Christian, and Moslem traditions has already been mentioned (pp. 29-31). It has not only been implied in these traditions but often specifically argued that the incorporeality of these beings entails their sense imperceptibility.

In the Christian tradition, St. Augustine and St. Thomas are prominent and representative proponents of the theological position that sense qualities and images are logically inadequate as the means of perceiving God or an angel. Augustine reasons in his Literal Commentary on Genesis that God is (and also presumably angels are) like

> the mind . . . the virtues . . . and everything else that we enumerate, distinguish and define by the understanding and thought, certainly not considering their lines or how they sound or what they smell like or what they taste like or whether they feel hot or cold, soft or hard, smooth or rough to the touch.[29]

If we understand Augustine's delineation of the methods commonly employed in defining and distinguishing entities like God (and angels) as a statement about the necessary character of that methodology given the meaning of terms like "God," then Augustine is here precluding both sense qualities and images as logically inadequate for the apprehension or knowledge of God (and angels).

Thomas Aquinas argues in the Summa Theologica that

> God is incorporeal . . . hence, He cannot be seen by the sense or the imagination, but only by the intellect.[30]

and Pseudo-Dionysius similarly says that

> the universal Cause transcending all things . . . is not a material body, and therefore does not possess . . . quality, or quantity, or solid weight; nor has It any local existence which can be perceived by sight or touch . . . [31]

Interpreting Thomas's and Pseudo-Dionysius's positions like Augustine's, this amounts to the logical claim that sense qualities and

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[29]Augustine, Literal Commentary on Genesis, Bk. XII, Ch. 2, translated from Patrologia Latina, Vol. 34, by Marilyn Adams. It will be seen later that Augustine argues (On the Trinity, Bk. II, Ch. 9) from the unchangeability of God to His invisibility and, hence, by implication there holds again that sense qualities and images are logically inadequate for a perception of God Himself.

[30]Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, in The Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, ed. Anton Pegis (New York, 1945), Pt. I, Q. 12, Art. 3. (Unless otherwise indicated, passages cited from the Summa Theologica or the Summa Contra Gentiles will be taken from this edition.) Also, e.g., see Summa Contra Gentiles, Bk. III, Ch. 11. Augustine maintains the same position in Literal Commentary on Genesis, Bk. XII, Chs. 4 and 5.

[31]Dionysius the Areopagite, The Mystical Theology, Ch. 4.

images logically cannot provide an adequate means of sensibly perceiving God Himself. (Thomas argues that this follows from the necessary incorporeality of God.) Similar reasoning will lead to the conclusion that the incorporeal beings, angels, cannot be perceived in themselves by means of sense qualities and images.

Turning to the Jewish and Moslem traditions, we have already seen that Maimonides takes an exceedingly strict view of the necessity of not interpreting putative sense perceptions of God and angels literally:

> You must know that whenever Scripture relates that the Lord or an angel spoke to a person, this took place in a dream or in a prophetic vision. . . . in prophetic allegories certain objects are seen, acts performed . . . all these things are only processes of a prophetic vision, and not real things that could be perceived by the senses of the body.[32]

It is difficult to determine whether Maimonides intends to make a factual or a logical point but his reasoning can plausibly be construed in the latter manner. More clearly, Maimonides specifically claims that angels are logically sense imperceptible:

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[32]Maimonides, Guide, Pt. II, Chs. 41 and 46. Also, see Pt. I, Ch. 47. Martin Buber suggests a somewhat similar interpretation of visions in his discussion of Isaiah's theophany:

> It is obvious that when the train of light filled the Temple in front of Isaiah, he could not have seen the form on the Throne at all. . . . He senses his seeing in the radiance as being a seeing of the Radiant. The impact of the sitting on the Throne as such replaces, for him, the form of the One seated on the Throne. (Moses, p. 116)

Buber's attempt to argue that Isaiah did not actually see God illustrates the lengths to which the user of the theological discourse may go to dissuade the reader from accepting the mystic literalist position. To my mind Buber's account of Isaiah's vision is unconvincing and implausible since in the account Isaiah not only directly states that he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne" but goes on to describe the features of the seraphim above God, features of creatures that Isaiah could not have seen on Buber's account since the brilliant light of God is supposed to have obliterated everything around it.

> Do not imagine that an angel is seen or his word heard otherwise than in a prophetic vision or prophetic dream . . . angels are incorporeal, and have no permanent bodily form independent of the mind [of the percipient] . . . The ordinary reader believes that the acts, journeys, questions, and answers of the prophets really took place, and were perceived by the senses, and did not merely form part of a prophetic vision.[33]

Al-Ghazzali expresses a similar notion about God in the Islamic tradition that the necessary incorporeality of God entails His sense imperceptibility by saying that

> God and the soul are . . . outside the categories of quantity and quality; nor can the ideas of shape, color or size attach to them. . . . in conceiving of the ultimate realities, God and the soul, we find ourselves in a region in which sense-concepts can bear no part.[34]

For Maimonides, and for Al-Ghazzali regarding God, sense qualities and images fail to provide a means of perceiving God and angels not on factual but on logical grounds: God and angels are not the <u>kinds</u> of entities that are sense perceptible and it is a category mistake to suppose that they are.

The theological claim that sense qualities and images are logically inadequate to provide the means of a perception of God and angels prima facie contradicts the mystic literalist claim that there can be genuine sense perceptions of God Himself and angels in themselves. It seems to me that our ordinary concepts of "seeing," "hearing," etc. and "sense perception" could <u>not</u> be sufficiently broadened, without fundamentally altering their central meaning, to include instances of perception in which the <u>sorts</u> of objects perceived were not or did not involve the proper objects of the senses such as shape,

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[33]Maimonides, <u>Guide</u>, Pt. II, Chs. 42, 44, and 46.

[34]Al-Ghazzali, <u>The Alchemy of Happiness</u>, pp. 35-36.

size, color, timbre, taste, etc. If percipients began professing that--what could not logically occur by means of the perception of shapes, colors, sounds and so on--they literally "saw the number three," "touched Beethoven's last string quartet,"[35] or "smelled human folly," we would regard their claims as logically contradictory. Putative sense perceptions of God and angels are similarly and equally linguistically deviant, in fact inconsistent, within the language game of perception of ordinary or theological discourse, since on the account of the users of these language games these beings logically could not be perceived by means of sense qualities and images.

However, the point of altercation here must be more carefully delineated; P_1 has the advantage of simplicity as an initial statement of the position of the users of theological discourse but on that count is all the more susceptible to misunderstanding. For at the least, it would not be cogent merely to object to the possibility of sense perceptions of God and angels that these beings are incorporeal: incorporeality as such does not entail sense imperceptibility. Numerous incorporeal entities are frequently seen in quite ordinary ways--e.g. shadows, movies, rainbows. And, indeed, mystic literalists do not deny the incorporeality of God and angels; for them God and angels will be, as are shadows and rainbows, sense perceptible even though incorporeal.

Augustine, Thomas, Maimonides, Al-Ghazzali, and other theologians who held that God and angels are sense imperceptible because they are incorporeal undoubtedly, though, meant "incorporeal" to

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[35] I would not include literally "hearing Beethoven's last string quartet" here.

exclude any physical phenomena, and this should be understood as the intended usage of "incorporeal" in P_1. While certain entities like rainbows, movies, and shadows are physical, though bodiless, phenomena and are thereby sense perceptible by means of at least one of the five external senses, God and angels are held to be neither corporeal beings nor physical phenomena, and hence, on the view of the users of non-mystic literalist religious and perceptual discourse, sense imperceptible.

Thus, the point at issue here is, of course, not whether God and angels are in themselves corporeal beings: the users of ordinary religious discourse and those subscribing to the conventions of mystic literalist discourse both agree that God and angels are incorporeal beings. Nor am I here concerned with the factual question of whether there have been actual cases of embodiment of one sort or another of God and angels. (The reason why the "facts" of mystical experiences will not ultimately settle the issues under consideration in this essay will be fully apparent when the problems dealt with in Chapter Six are discussed.)

As Martin Buber phrases it, the point at issue here concerns "an invisible God, who, however, becomes visible at will. How, as what, wherein does he become visible?"[36] The basis of the mystic literalist reply, a reply which the theological discourse disagrees with, to "how" and "as what" the incorporeal being, God, becomes visible is expressed in Numbers 12:6-8:

> If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision, I speak to him in a dream. Not

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[36]Buber, Moses, p. 117.

> so with my servant Moses . . . with him I speak mouth to mouth . . . and he beholds the form of the Lord. (Italics mine)

Mystic literalist statements either explicitly or, as will be argued, implicitly involve the claim that the "form" of God is perceived in a theophany. (And similarly their statements about sensibly perceiving angels explicitly or implicitly involve the claim that the "form" of the angel is perceived in an epiphany.) What could it mean to say that the incorporeal beings, God and angels, appear in a sense-perceptible form? Importantly, for the theologian the answer to this question must preserve the doctrine of the incorporeality of these beings as well as remain as true as possible to the facts which the religiously authoritative mystic literalists report about their experiences. The orthodox western theological discourse offers an answer to this question which is at variance with the mystic literalist position and it is this discrepancy which constitutes the actual point of conflict between the users of mystic literalist discourse and those who use the ordinary western theological discourse.

What is the nature of this "form" of God or of an angel which the mystic literalists perceive? When mystic literalists perceive the form of God or an angel, they claim to perceive God Himself or an angel itself. I will call the form so perceived the "proper sense-perceptible form" of God or of the angel. In explicating this notion, I am not primarily concerned with whether mystic literalists have been sufficiently careful and perspicuous (often just the reverse is true) to explicate assiduously the precise status of the "forms" which they perceive. Most mystic literalists may not explicitly describe or have consciously thought that the forms which they perceived were the

"proper" sense-perceptible forms of God and angels in the sense in which I will use this term. Rather, the notion of a "proper sense-perceptible form" of God or of an angel will be developed in this essay in order to render the mystic literalist claims intelligible.

As a general characterization of what this term will need to mean in order to clarify the mystic literalist discourse, a proper sense-perceptible form of an entity, X, will be taken as a physical phenomenon[37] which is such that strictly in virtue of sensibly perceiving that phenomenon a percipient can truly be said to have perceived X. The notion of a "proper sense-perceptible form" is meant to be a device to capture the idea that in certain circumstances when we say that a perceiver, P, has by sensory means perceived an object, X, we mean that P has sensibly perceived, or perceived a sufficient subset of, some particular physical phenomenon--viz. what I designate as the "proper sense-perceptible form of X."

The extensional characteristics--e.g. shape, color--of physical objects such as chairs and of non-physical object physical phenomena such as rainbows and shadows are the proper sense-perceptible forms of these entities. To say, in normal perceptual circumstances, that one has perceived a particular chair is to say that one has perceived the whole or a sufficient subset of the shape and/or color intensity and/or pattern and so on of that chair. (We do not of course need to perceive the complete shape of e.g. a chair to be justified under normal perceptual circumstances in saying that we saw that chair.)

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[37] See footnote 39, p. 51, below.

The qualification in normal perceptual circumstances is meant to exclude cases such as those involving dreaming or viewing representational art where perceptual locutions like "I saw" may be employed ("in my dream I saw," "while viewing David's The Death of Socrates I saw") yet given the abnormal perceptual circumstances it does not follow from the fact that X is "seen" that the proper sense-perceptible form of X is literally seen. If I dream about my armchair and in my dream see the form of my armchair, it is true that in my dream I saw my armchair but not that I (unqualified) literally saw my armchair. Cases like that of dreaming which are intended to be excluded by the qualifier "in normal perceptual circumstances," are instances in which the perceptual locutions "I see," etc. do not refer to literal perceptions[38] and thus "P sees (etc.) X" does not entail "P literally sees (etc.) the proper sense-perceptible form of X" (though P may perceive, e.g., a representation of the proper sense-perceptible form of X). All of this is, I take it, unexceptional. The more interesting proper sense-perceptible forms are related to such entities as people, plays, operas, and movies.

When we say that we have just seen or touched, etc., a person, say Jones, we mean that we have just seen or touched, etc., Jones's body, or some portion of Jones's body--e.g. his head--and this justifies, in ordinary perceptual circumstances, our claim to have sensibly perceived Jones. This is true whatever theory of the mind turns out to be correct. It is obviously true for materialism that to, e.g.,

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[38]If while viewing David's painting The Death of Socrates I "see the cup of hemlock," I literally look at paint splotches in "seeing the cup," but I do not literally see the cup. See Ch. Three, Sec. I.

see Jones means to see Jones's body. But, for example, whether or not dualism is correct, the dualist must take into account the fact that what we mean in normal perceptual circumstances by seeing Jones is seeing the whole or some identifying portion of Jones's body, even if Jones is identical with his mind alone. A person's body, whatever theory of mind is correct, is the proper sense-perceptible form of that person.[39]

Plays, operas and movies share this interesting feature. There is a class of physical phenomena--the performances or, in the case of movies, the "showings"--instances of which usually only occasionally come about (though they could be continuously concatenated or might never come about) such that to say that a percipient saw, etc., the play, opera, or movie in question is to say that he sensibly perceived an instance of that class of states of affairs. Thus, if I say that, under normal perceptual circumstances, I have seen O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night or Mozart's Don Giovanni, I mean, and will be taken to mean, that I have seen and heard a performance of O'Neill's play or Mozart's opera. Performances and showings are the proper sense-perceptible forms of, respectively, plays and operas, and movies.

I will refer to the fact that when we say that a percipient, P, literally sensibly perceived an object, X, we mean that P literally sensibly perceived the proper sense-perceptible form of X by saying that there is a conceptual connection between sensibly perceiving the

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[39]Though of course for the idealist, "body" and, as we are inclined to use it, "physical phenomenon" will have to be appropriately redefined in non-materialistic terms.

proper sense-perceptible form of X and sensibly perceiving X.

Now, since mystic literalist statements involve or imply that God and angels are sense perceptible by means of a proper sense-perceptible form, we can ask (1) what the theological discourse would say about this claim, and (2) whether we can make sense out of the supposition that God or an angel has a proper sense-perceptible form and, if so, how disruptive this notion will be to the orthodox theological position. These questions about the proper sense-perceptible forms of God and angels will be first analyzed insofar as they are applied to God, the conclusions reached on the basis of that discussion then being applied to the case of angels.

V

The Christian theological tradition exhibits a prominent bias against the suggestion that God can have a proper sense-perceptible form. "[God] is formless" and "the formless and intangible essence of unembodied things . . . cannot be comprehended or perceived by means of . . . [things] which have bodily form" (Dionysius the Areopagite);[40] "if the sweetness of some fruit unknown may not be pictured through any painting or image, . . . who am I . . . to show Thee, that art beyond showing" (Nicholas of Cusa).[41] Likewise, Maimonides says in his discussion of Ezekiel's visions of God that the perceived forms are not forms of God because "God cannot be compared to anything."[42] Inso-

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[40] Dionysius the Areopagite, The Divine Names, Chs. 1 and 4.

[41] Nicholas of Cusa, The Vision of God, p. 86.

[42] Maimonides, Guide, Pt. III, Ch. 7. It is not clear whether Gershom Scholem, in his analysis of Jewish mysticism, believes that it

far as these statements can plausibly be construed as statements about the logical impossibility and not merely factual inadequacy of any sensible form being the proper sense-perceptible form of God, the theological discourse exemplified by these writers will prima facie contradict the accounts in the mystic literalist discourse of reputed sense perceptions of God. A careful consideration of St. Augustine's and St. Thomas's discussions of the notion that there can be no proper sensible form for God will sharpen the details of this (apparent) contradiction between the theological and mystic literalist discourses. Thomas bases his analysis on Augustine's treatment of this issue and his analysis will be discussed insofar as he illuminates or adds to Augustine's position.

Augustine offers an extremely interesting analogy in The City of God to illustrate the relationship which he feels holds between perceiving forms in which God appears and perceiving God:

> Neither need we be surprised that God, invisible as He is, should often have appeared visibly to the patriarchs. For as sound which communicates the thought conceived in the silence of the mind is not the thought itself, so the form by which God, invisible in His own nature, became visible, was not God Himself. Nevertheless it is He Himself who was seen under that form, as that thought itself is heard in the sound of the voice . . . [43]

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is intelligible to think that God might have a proper sensible form. He distinguishes between "God in Himself" and "God in his appearance" (Jewish Mysticism, p. 11) and says that in Hasidism "God's appearance" rather than His "true nature" is perceived (pp. 64-66 and p. 113). The point Scholem is making might be that one must distinguish between apprehending God Himself and apprehending an appearance of God such that no apparent sensible apprehension of God, including of God's "form," in this life could (logically) count as a perception of God Himself. This would be similar to Buber's notion that the radiance around God but not God's form was perceived by Isaiah. (See footnote 32, p. 44.)

[43] Augustine, The City of God, Bk. X, Ch. 13, cited from The Works of Aurelius Augustine, Vol. I, ed. Marcus Dods (Edinburgh, 1878).

God, Augustine says, is seen by means of the forms in which He appears, yet at the same time Augustine wants to say that visions do "not manifest God properly as He is but [manifest Him] by intimations . . ."[44] In what sense then for Augustine is God perceived by means of these forms? To understand the structure of the analogy Augustine is proposing between the relationship between perceiving utterances and perceiving thoughts and that between perceiving God and perceiving visible forms of God, and to help assess the effectiveness of the analogy in accounting for the reported facts of the mystic literalist experiences, consider the following range of perception pairings. These are pairings of perceptions of a first entity, X, and, in virtue of that perception, the perception of a second entity, Y:

A. (Augustine's case) Hearing an utterance and hearing the thought of the utterer.

B. Seeing a performance of O'Neill's play Long Day's Journey into Night and seeing Long Day's Journey into Night.

C. Seeing Jones's footprints and seeing that Jones was present.

D. Seeing Richard play Hamlet in a performance of Hamlet and seeing Richard.

E. Seeing Richard wearing a full-scale mastodon costume that completely hides him from view and seeing Richard.

In A, as Augustine points out, the utterance is not identical with the thought which it conveys, just as, Augustine believes, the form in which God presents Himself is not God Himself--that is, God is not a corporeal entity.[45] Also, Augustine's example exhibits the fur-

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[44] Augustine, On the Trinity, Bk. II, Ch. 17. Likewise, Dionysius the Areopagite refers to visions in which the Godhead is "symbolically manifested" (The Divine Names, p. 61).

[45] Thus, in referring to the epiphanic appearances of the Holy Spirit as a dove and as a fire, Augustine says that "we cannot call

ther appropriate parallelism that while God and, as Augustine conceives of them, thoughts are incorporeal, both theophanic forms of God and utterances are sensible phenomena.

The relationship between perceiving an utterance and perceiving the correspondent thought is more complex, though, than simply the "fact" that hearing the utterance is, in some sense, hearing the thought of the utterer. To hear the utterer's thoughts by means of his utterances one must at least, ceteris paribus (e.g. the utterer did not mis-speak), hear the utterance, understand the utterance and understand that the utterance is, given normal circumstances, intended by the utterer as a communication of his thoughts. Without the meta-linguistic convention within a particular language community that intentionally uttering a particular sentence, without intending to deceive, etc., is to be taken as an expression of the appropriate thoughts, hearing an utterance would not count in any sense as "hearing" the utterer's thought. That is, it is in virtue of this meta-linguistic convention that when we say that we have "heard from S, S's own thoughts about . . ." we mean that we have heard S express himself using the appropriate sorts of expressions accepted by the relevant language community which entail, under normal circumstances, that S thinks such-and-such.

It is an empirical matter which sorts of spoken noises, marks on paper, etc., are to be taken in a particular language community as expressing particular thoughts. But once these matters of fact have become established, the meta-linguistic convention within a particular

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the Holy Spirit both God and a dove, or both God and fire" (On the Trinity, Bk. II, Ch. 6).

language community that intentionally uttering a particular sentence, under normal circumstances, is to be taken as an expression of certain thoughts provides a conceptual connection between particular utterances and particular thoughts. Augustine himself may not have been willing to characterize his thoughts/utterances analogy as implying that, because of similar operative meta-linguistic conventions, a conceptual connection relates the perception of a visible form of God and perceiving God Himself. But as I hope to show, his position is most faithful to mystic literalist claims if it is construed in this manner. In any case, one facet of Augustine's analogy which must be assessed later regarding a theophany is this. What, if anything, serves the same function as the meta-linguistic conventions conceptually relating particular intended utterances and the utterer's particular thoughts such that in the analogous case of the theophany a sensible form not identical with God is a form of God's?

Now, consider the similarities and dissimilarities between Augustine's analogy A and, as an attempted analogy to perceiving a sensible form of God and thereby perceiving God Himself, the relationship of a perception of a particular performance of a play to perceiving the play itself. Plays and thoughts and God are incorporeal entities and their performances, verbal expression and appearances, respectively, are physical phenomena. Further, like utterances in their relationship to thoughts, there is a set of conventions defining the relationship of accurate performances of a particular play (or just performances of a particular play since if they are not relatively accurate they will not be performances of that play) to the play of which they are performances. It follows from what we mean by "a per-

formance of a play" that there is for the most part a one-to-one correspondence between the parts of the performance and the play itself although a particular performance may lack such a correspondence either to the author's intended, or to possible, nuances, evocative feelings, dynamics, etc. of "better" performances.

Even so, it is significant that the sense in which either Augustine or Aquinas thinks that perceiving God's sensible form is related to perceiving God is not the sense in which perceiving a performance of a play is related to perceiving that play. Augustine and Thomas[46] deny any sort of one-to-one correspondence between the forms God appears in and God Himself. Augustine says in On the Trinity, as we have seen, that visions "do not manifest God properly as He is." In this respect Augustine's analogy well suits his purposes since utterances, also, do not for the most part have a simple one-to-one correspondence to the thoughts of the speaker.

There is a second important dissimilarity between B and Augustine's analogy. Seeing (and hearing) a performance of Long Day's Journey into Night is, if the performance is faithful to the script, seeing the entirety of O'Neill's play even though the particular rendition viewed may not be skillful or powerful or polished. In contrast, hearing utterances is not really hearing the speaker's thoughts. Hearing particular utterances is, given the necessary meta-linguistic conventions, hearing that the utterer has certain thoughts: thoughts which are signified or, very loosely, represented, by the particular utterances in question. This aspect of the relationship between hear-

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[46]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Pt. I, Q. 12, Art. 11.

ing utterances and hearing the utterer's thoughts indicates an important feature of the perception pairing, which Augustine feels is parallel, between seeing forms of God and seeing God. For Augustine, seeing the form of God is seeing that God is present or possesses certain characteristics or is performing certain acts.

In On the Trinity, Augustine says that when God appears by means of "visible and sensible forms," He is "figuratively signified."[47] That is, these forms serve as a sign of God or His acts or characteristics: as Augustine puts it earlier in On the Trinity, "[At most God] may have given intimations of Himself to mortal senses by a corporeal form or likeness"[48] and Augustine offers, in Book III, Chapter 5, as an example of "intimations" of God given through corporeal phenomena, the theophanic thunderstorm on Mt. Sinai recorded in Exodus 19. Thus for Augustine, what is sensibly perceived in a theophany is truly a sign of God, but God Himself is not perceived. The reason that for Augustine theophanic forms of God are only signs of His presence and/or acts or characteristics and that by perceiving these forms the percipient does not directly perceive God Himself is that "those words and bodily appearances which were given to these ancient fathers . . . when God was said to appear, were wrought by angels"[49] (where angels are beings not identical with God). For Augus-

[47]Augustine, On the Trinity, Bk. II, Ch. 11, cited from The Works of Aurelius Augustine (Vol. VII).

[48]Augustine, On the Trinity, Bk. II, Ch. 18.

[49]Ibid., Bk. III, Ch. 11, from The Works of Aurelius Augustine. Earlier in the chapter Augustine says that, in appearing to Abraham, God by "speaking by the angel," "caused Himself to be seen." Thus as an example of what he means by "seeing God," Augustine uses the appearance of a being, the angel, distinct from God which acts as a messenger for God.

tine, it is the angels which act as intermediaries and whose presence, acts and characteristics indicate God's presence and/or acts or characteristics.

Along the same line, Augustine says in his Literal Commentary on Genesis that we enumerate and distinguish God, intelligence and the virtues "by another evidence . . . more certain than the evidence of the senses."[50] Thus, he says, "love can be perceived only with the . . . intellect"[51] and likewise "[only] by the understanding is . . . God Himself . . . caught sight of."[52] Hence, for Augustine God Himself is only perceivable by means of the intellect and while God is sensibly perceived by means of the form in which He appears, He is sensibly perceived in the sense that it is God about whom these appearances, which are the appearances of angels, represent something.

Aquinas holds a similar position. In Pt. II, II, Q. 174, Art. 4 of the Summa Theologica, Thomas says that Moses saw the form of God and explicates what he means by this by citing the Exodus account that God spoke to Moses "face to face." In Pt. I, Q. 12, Art. 11 of the Summa Theologica, Thomas says that "when Jacob says, I have seen God face to face, this does not mean the divine essence, but some figure representing God." Putting these passages together, to say, for Thomas, that the form of God is seen is to say that God is seen face to face, which is in turn to say that the percipient has either a corporeal or imaginary vision of God in which he perceives a form which

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[50]Augustine, Literal Commentary on Genesis, Bk. XII, Ch. 3.

[51]Ibid., Bk. XII, Ch. 11.

[52]Ibid., Bk. XII, Ch. 24.

represents God.[53] In the same vein, Aquinas says in the Summa Contra Gentiles that when scripture states that God is seen, this must be understood as a corporeal or imaginary vision in which "the presence of divine power is shown by corporeal species";[54] i.e. by seeing a form representing God the percipient does not see God but sees that God (or God's power) is present.[55]

Unlike Thomas's and Augustine's view of the perception pairing of seeing a visible form of God and seeing God, performances of plays do not represent, or in Augustine's terminology "signify," the plays of which they are performances. Seeing an accurate performance of a play is seeing the play; for Thomas and Augustine, seeing the form of God is seeing a sign of God--that is, it is seeing that God is present or possesses certain characteristics or is performing certain acts, just as hearing a particular utterance is hearing that the utterer has certain thoughts.

If hearing utterances is hearing that the speaker has certain thoughts, is hearing utterances and seeing visible forms of God like seeing Jones's footprints since these acts imply, respectively, hearing that the utterer has certain thoughts, seeing that God is present (or has a certain nature) and seeing that Jones was present? No.

From Jones's footprints in the sand one can infer his recent

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[53]St. Bernard of Clairvaux similarly says that "the Word . . . frequently appears to zealous souls, and not under one appearance only . . . because we are not yet able to see Him as He is" (Sermons on the Song of Songs [Vol. IV of Life and Works of St. Bernard, ed. Samuel Eales, London, 1896], Sermon 31; see also Sermon 41, par. 3).

[54]Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, Bk. III, Ch. 47.

[55]In Moses Martin Buber offers precisely the same analysis of scriptural reports that God is seen (p. 117).

presence. Augustine does say that the purpose of sensible manifestations of God is to induce the percipient to "turn" from the manifestations to God Himself.[56] However, the inference from Jones's footprints to Jones's recent presence is based on inductive reasoning and empirical evidence. It is not based on a conceptual connection as is the case in the inference from particular utterances to particular thoughts once the empirical matter of what utterances will be taken as expressing which thoughts is settled. There is, only, one empirical connection between Jones's footprints and Jones's presence; seeing footprints is not part of what we mean by "seeing that P (a person) is (or was) present." In contradistinction to C, Augustine's use of the utterance/thought case as an analogy implies that a conceptual connection and not just an empirical one relates the perception of the visible forms of God to perceiving God. We do not regard a speaker's utterances, under normal circumstances, within our language community as mere empirical evidence that he has certain thoughts. And indeed, as we shall see, though Augustine disagrees, the mystic literalists do not feel that a theophany involving a visible form of God is simply an empirically verifiable trace of His presence, left like footprints in the sand.

Lastly, to finish comparing perception pairings with Augustine's analogy and perceiving visible forms of God and perceiving God, consider cases D and E. Case D. The actor, Richard, is not identical with Hamlet. This parallels the aspect of Augustine's analogy that utterances are not identical with the thoughts they express. More-

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[56]Augustine, On the Trinity, Bk. II, Ch. 2.

over, if Richard takes the part of Hamlet in a performance of Hamlet, aspects of his performance will provide an indication of ("intimation of" to use Augustine's expression) literal characteristics of Richard--viz. certain abilities, character traits, etc. Yet watching Richard acting in the role of Hamlet and thereby seeing Richard fails (besides the asymmetry of Richard's corporeality with the incorporeality of thoughts) to completely parallel perceiving utterances and thereby perceiving the utterer's thoughts. For, seeing Richard play Hamlet is seeing Richard and not just seeing that Richard is present or that Richard has certain character traits, etc.

In this respect E is closer to the utterances and thoughts, the form of God and God Himself pairings. Richard dresses up in a full-scale mastodon costume, a costume which hides the wearer completely from view. Here the parallels preserved with the utterances/thoughts and, thereby for Augustine, the form of God/God Himself cases are that Richard is not identical with the mastodon form he appears in, there is no extensive one-to-one correspondence of parts between the form and the actor, and, unlike D, seeing the mastodon costume does not count as seeing Richard. Of course, E, like D, is asymmetrical with the utterance/thought, form of God/God Himself cases in that only in the latter two are the second members of the pairings incorporeal entities. However, despite the important similarities of E to Augustine's original analogical pairing, A, a serious defect in the effectiveness of Augustine's analogy in capturing the reported facts of mystic literalist experiences is exposed on closer attention to E. If the viewers of the mastodon costume are reasonably certain that Richard is in the costume, by seeing the costume they can see that Richard is present,

and see <u>that</u> he has certain characteristics. But how are the viewers of the mastodon costume--assuming that they have no prior way of determining with certainty that Richard put on the costume--going to have any reasonable certitude of correctly identifying the person who is dressed in the costume as Richard?

In the case of D the viewers are better able to ascertain that Richard is playing Hamlet (the actor has the correct build, speaks fluent English, etc.) but D has the undesirable feature that seeing Hamlet is seeing Richard. E, on the other hand, reintroduces the difficulties encountered in C (seeing Jones's footprints and thereby seeing that Jones was present). Empirical evidence may provide some grounds for concluding that it is (even highly) probable that Richard is inside the mastodon costume (he <u>said</u> he would be, he is listed on the program under the part "Mastodon," etc.). But the mastodon costume is not Richard's proper sense perceptible form. Like the relationship of footprints in the sand to Jones's recent presence, there is no strong conceptual connection, and thus only a weak basis for inference, between the presence and movements of the mastodon costume and Richard's presence or characteristics. The question which this raises is: If God never appears in a form that is God's proper sense-perceptible form, <u>F</u>, such that if <u>P</u> perceives <u>F</u>, <u>P</u> is perceiving God, the percipients of visions will be like the viewers of the mastodon costume: how could the percipient of a vision of God have any reasonable certainty of determining that it <u>is</u> a vision <u>of God</u>?[57]

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[57]We can see how this same problem will arise for Martin Buber's interpretation of God's theophanic forms:

> YHVH remains the invisible One, who only permits Himself to be seen in the flame . . . in the flash of lighten-

VI

With the addition of the following consideration, our analysis of the theological position on the sense imperceptibility of God will have advanced far enough to make it possible to fill in several details of P_1 in order for P_1 to more adequately state the crucial aspects of the theological position which is opposed to that of the mystic literalists.

The discussion of B (seeing plays and their performances) led to the recognition of the feature of Augustine's analogy that from hearing utterances we can hear that the speaker has certain thoughts, but we cannot really hear those thoughts. By parallel reasoning, and in accordance with his own explicit assertions, Augustine thinks that by perceiving the theophanic forms of God the percipient merely sees that God is present or has certain characteristics. Thomas compares the representation of God by sensible forms to the manner in which divine objects are metaphorically described in scripture by means of sensible things.[58] Metaphorical truth depends on literal truth. Richard is properly said to be lion-hearted due to his possession of an appropriate property--e.g. he is fierce or fearless. And if Richard is metaphorically described as lion-hearted, we can infer that he is fierce or fearless or possesses some similar property. Similarly,

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ing. Admittedly anthropomorphic manifestations also alternate with these; but none of them shows an unequivocally clear-cut figure with which YHVH might be identified.

For this reason He should not be imaged, that is, limited to any one definite form. (Buber, Moses, pp. 126-127)

[58] Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Pt. I, Q. 12, Art. 3. For the same interpretation in Pseudo-Dionysius, see The Divine Names, p. 61.

God might be metaphorically represented as a warrior of immense physical stature and strength in order to signify God's literal possession of the attribute of omnipotence or steadfastness. And Thomas's interpretation of the visible forms of God as metaphorically related to His actual characteristics implies, like Augustine's analogy of utterances to thoughts, that one does not see God Himself in virtue of seeing the form of God but one sees _that_ God is present or _that_ He has certain attributes.[59]

The serious inherent problem with such an interpretation of theophanies (and epiphanies of angels) is that those having such experiences do not, usually, claim to perceive an _appearance_ of God (or an angel). The participants having these experiences claim to, e.g., _see God_ (or an angel), not merely to see _that_ God (or that an angel) is present or _that He_ (or that an angel) possesses certain attributes or is performing certain acts.[60] An exception to this is Ezekiel's qualificatory description (Ezekiel 1) of his vision as a vision of a "likeness of a throne," "a likeness as it were of a human form," and his description of the "appearance" of the details of the vision. Ezekiel may thus intend to indicate that he does not feel

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[59]Maimonides thinks that sensible forms in visions _allegorically_ represent divine beings and events (_Guide_, Pt. II, Ch. 43. Allegorical truth, like metaphorical truth, depends on literal truth and Maimonides's suggestion will have the same consequences here as Thomas's.

[60]In this regard there is a fascinating bronze by Giovanni Cateni (1662-1732) of "Moses and the Burning Bush" (located in the Museo del Prado in Madrid). In Cateni's bronze, Moses is shown in front of a burning bush on the flames of which is seated a complete, full-sized (relative to Moses' size) figure of a man with a triangle lying on his head indicating that he is God. Here Cateni represents the burning bush scene, perhaps incorrectly but provocatively, as if what Moses sees is _God's form_ and not merely _that_ God is present.

that he saw God Himself but only an appearance (though he begins by saying that he saw "visions of God"). But just insofar as Ezekiel's account is thereby an exception to the usual declarative account of visions as visions of God and angels themselves, the anomalousness of Ezekiel's account only serves to emphasize the fact that most percipients who experience visions talk about the entities in their visions as being x's and not "appearances" or "likenesses" of x's.

Were it the case that in virtue of sensibly perceiving a theophanic form the percipient thereby sensibly perceived God Himself, then that form would be God's proper sense-perceptible form. The point of conflict between the mystic literalists and the users of ordinary theological language can now be reformulated as arising from the general position--extending the discussion for a moment to include angels--in the theological discourse that:

P_2 Since God and angels are not only incorporeal but do not have proper sense-perceptible forms, they are logically imperceptible by means of sense qualities and images.

Notice that the controversy here between the mystic literalists and the users of theological discourse is not over whether God is immediately or only mediately sense perceptible. (This and the following remarks will apply equally to angels.) For the mystic literalist God is immediately sense perceptible: it is God Himself who is claimed to be literally perceived by means of sense qualities and images. While denying this, users of the ordinary theological discourse also deny that God Himself is mediately sense perceptible. For the users of the theological discourse, the most that the mystic logically could perceive in a vision is states of affairs from which it can be inferred that God is present or that He has a certain charac-

ter or is performing certain acts. By means of its reflection in a mountain lake, we can mediately perceive a pine tree. We might by means of the reflection just infer that the pine was nearby, but we can by means of the reflection mediately perceive (apart from any inference) the pine itself. For the user of the theological discourse no sort of mediate sense perception of God Himself is possible.

Hence, P_2 can be more precisely reformulated:

P_3 Since God and angels are not only incorporeal but do not have proper sense-perceptible forms, God Himself and angels themselves are logically imperceptible, whether immediately or mediately, by means of sense qualities and images.

The mystic literalist claims contradict P_3 on the strongest grounds. For them, God Himself is immediately sense perceptible and this in turn implies that there is a sensible form such that solely in virtue of sensibly perceiving that form the mystic perceives God Himself--i.e. it implies that God has a proper sense-perceptible form.

The relationship between particular utterances and particular thoughts and the connection between their perception is, on the analysis I have offered, a conceptual one. Thus, the structure of Augustine's proposed utterances/thought analogy suggests that Augustine might have intuited the need for such a conceptual connection between perceiving a visible form of God and perceiving God, though he was clearly unwilling to accept the consequences of allowing for a proper sense-perceptible form for God. In any event, were he to accept the mystic literalists' claim to see God Himself, Augustine's utterances/thoughts analogy would account for this fact if construed as embodying a conceptual relationship between perceiving an utterance and thereby perceiving the corresponding thought.

Of course the user of the theological discourse preserves the coherence of his position by denying that mystics see God Himself or see angels themselves. If mystics only see that God, or that an angel, is present or has particular characteristics, the user of theological discourse can remain faithful to the reported facts of the mystics' experiences, while holding that God and angels have no proper sense-perceptible form the perception of which is conceptually related to the perception of God Himself or of an angel itself.

VII

On the other hand, an analysis of the visions of the mystic literalists which would account for all the claimed features of their visions must be such that God Himself (or an angel itself) is perceived, and not merely that God (or an angel) is present or has certain characteristics. Additionally, if the mystic literalists are to be credited with any reasonable certainty in their claims to literally perceive God (or a particular angel) by means of the forms which they perceive, these identifications cannot be regarded as being based merely on an empirical, evidential connection between perceiving a form in which God (or an angel) appears and perceiving God Himself (or the angel itself). These identifications will need to be based on a conceptual connection or the mystic literalists will be in at least as epistemically unfavorable a position as the viewers of the mastodon costume are for identifying Richard as the one who is wearing the costume.

The rudiments of a model which will explain these two aspects of their experiences, if the accounts of the mystics are to be taken

seriously, might be suggested by the following line of reasoning, a line of reasoning never specifically pursued by the mystics and their commentators, to my knowledge, but one which provides a viable rendering of their position. For the purposes of developing a model, consider a (Cartesian type) dualist conception (which Augustine himself held) of the relationship of the human mind to the human body. With that conception in mind think about the following two perceptual act pairs: perceiving the visible theophanic form of God as it is related to perceiving God Himself and perceiving the body of a human as it is related to perceiving the human himself. Now in both cases the first member of the pair is not identical with the second, for on the dualist position a person is not, even in part, identical with his body but with his mind or soul, and in both cases, the second member of the pair is an incorporeal entity. Mystic literalists and users of theological discourse agree that God is incorporeal and is, obviously, not identical with His theophanic form. Given a dualist mind-body account, seeing a person by seeing that person's body might provide a reasonable though limited analogy to the relationship between the mystic literalist experience of seeing a sensible form of God and thereby seeing God Himself.

For the purposes of this model, the parallel sought with the form of God/God Himself case is something like an infrequent and transitory relationship of a human soul (or mind) with a body, conceived on a dualist account of the distinction between the mind and the body.[61] This form to which, on rare occasions, God would be related

[61]This dualist mind-body relationship is considerably more tenuous than that, say, on the attribute (double-aspect) theory of, e.g., Spinoza or, more recently, P. F. Strawson.

would be the proper sense-perceptible form of God in the sense that the actions, speech-acts, and presence of this form would count as the actions, speech-acts, and presence of God Himself. On this suggested model God is not embodied. He would not, for instance, use five external senses for acquiring information about the environment.

Just as what we mean by saying that under normal perceptual circumstances we see (or otherwise sensibly perceive) Jones is that we see (hear, etc.) Jones's body, to say that one sensibly perceived God under normal perceptual circumstances would mean that one sensibly perceived this proper sense-perceptible form of God. Here sensibly perceiving God "under normal perceptual circumstances" is meant to exclude, e.g., dreaming--i.e. is meant to exclude cases in which locutions such as "P sees God" do not refer to literal sense perceptions and hence do not entail literally perceiving God's proper sense-perceptible form.

In contrast, we cannot correctly say that we see Richard when we see the mastodon costume which he wears since to do so would be to imply that we see Richard's proper sense-perceptible form--i.e. his body. This is why all that we can properly say when we see the mastodon costume which Richard wears is "we see that Richard was acting inside the mastodon costume" and the "that" in "that Richard was . . ." stands for an empirical implication, not the sort of conceptual connection relating seeing Jones's body and, solely in virtue of that, seeing Jones.

It is true that, just as in the case of determining whether the entity being perceived is the mastodon costume, empirical evidential grounds would most probably be used to determine with certainty

if it is God's proper sense-perceptible form which one is perceiving. (Though it could be claimed that a non-inferential recognition of God's form is more fundamental--i.e. is always to be given precedence in instances of conflict--than an inferential recognition of God's proper sense-perceptible form.)[62] However, for rendering the mystic literalist discourse intelligible, the notion that God has a proper sense-perceptible form has two salient strengths over the view that God has no proper sense-perceptible form. First, in accordance with mystic literalist claims, it is God Himself and not (whether immediately or mediately) that God is present or possesses certain characteristics which is sensibly perceived on this analysis. Secondly, a second inference on empirical grounds does not need to be made from perceiving God's (or Jones's) proper sense-perceptible form to perceiving God Himself (or Jones himself). A second inference would need to be made on empirical grounds from perceiving a non-proper sense-perceptible theophanic form of God or from perceiving the mastodon costume to perceiving that God or that Richard is present or has certain characteristics. Like the former two cases of perceiving God or Jones, whereas empirical grounds are needed to determine the identity

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[62]Such non-inferential recognitions are commonplace. One might, by looking at Jones's body, recognize Jones inferentially in a rule-like fashion on the basis of physical features and mannerisms which one knows that Jones possesses, but we commonly non-inferentially recognize our friends, and a percipient could non-inferentially recognize another person the first time he saw him if he had, e.g., intensively studied photographs of that person. Similarly the percipient of a vision could, given a prior knowledge of the characteristics of the proper sensible form of God, non-inferentially recognize God as a visionary entity in a vision--that is, non-inferentially see God and not just see that God is present. Perhaps this is what St. Teresa did when she says that "when I was at Mass there stood before me the most Sacred Humanity, as painters represent Him after the resurrection" (Life, Ch. 28).

of an utterance, the further connection between an utterance and a thought is a conceptual one. The rules connecting perceiving the proper sense-perceptible form of God and perceiving God Himself would be meaning rules regarding what we mean by "perceives X," not rules involving empirical criteria which must be used inferentially to determine whether by perceiving certain states of affairs one perceives, e.g., "that X is present."

Thus, if God has a proper sense-perceptible form of the sort suggested by the model, there would be a set of conventions, paralleling the meta-linguistic rules connecting utterances and thoughts, which would provide a conceptual connection between God's form and perceiving that form and God Himself and perceiving God Himself. And, just as there are limitations on the implication which holds between hearing an utterance and thereby "hearing" the speaker's thoughts--a conceptual connection which holds under normal conditions, e.g. the utterer did not mis-speak--there would be limitations on the implication from a perception of the apparent proper sensible form of God to one's perception of God Himself. Besides the stricture that the perception occur in normal perceptual circumstances, these latter limitations might include ones which are like those which circumscribe how far a performance of a play, X, can deviate from a strict rendering of X and still be a performance of X. Further, like those limitations on what constitutes a "proper" performance of a play, the limitations on what constitutes a proper sense-perceptible form of God would not be hard and fast but rather flexible.[63]

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[63]Such limitations are suggested by Augustine's assertion in On the Trinity that the Holy Spirit (and, I take it, this applies

From the point of view of orthodox western theism, there are various problems with this suggested analogy for perceiving God's visible form and perceiving God with perceiving a body and thereby perceiving the person as construed on a dualist-like conception of the mind-body relationship. One problem is that, as previously noted, Augustine and Thomas deny that God is ever properly sensibly perceived in Himself while to see, touch, etc. Jones's body is to see, touch, etc., Jones. A more important problem is that it is clear why theologians reject such a conception: it is all too susceptible to anthropomorphism. However, besides allowing for the recognition of God in the visions under consideration, the basic incongruity with the claims of the mystics of Augustine's original analogy--that in seeing God's form mystic literalists claim thereby to see God Himself--is corrected by the use of the notion of a proper sense-perceptible form for God modelled on a dualist conception of seeing a person's body and thereby seeing that person. Augustine himself even raises the possibility of using this analogy. In The City of God, in his discussion of whether God, as a "spirit," could be seen by the saints in heaven by means of their bodies, he points out for comparison that after all:

> The life of other men, though it is invisible, [each man] sees with the bodily eye. For how do we distinguish between living and dead bodies, except by seeing at once both the body and the life which we cannot see save by the eye? But a life without a body we cannot see thus.[64]

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equally to Christ or God the Father) is only manifested in "a way that is fit" (Bk. II, Ch. 6).

[64]Augustine, The City of God, Bk. XXII, Ch. 29. Augustine does eventually conclude, though, that only "intimations" of God and not God Himself are seen, and thus he need not, as he does not, hold that God possesses a proper sense-perceptible form.

Moreover, there is a theological objection to the possibility of genuine sense perceptions of God which I have not yet commented on that is countered by the supposition that God has a proper sense-perceptible form. This objection to the possibility of genuine perceptions of God by means of sense qualities and images is founded on God's immutability. Augustine argues in On the Trinity that

> neither God the Father, nor His Word, nor His Spirit . . . is in any way changeable in regard to that which He is, and whereby He is that which He is; and much less in this regard visible since there are no doubt some things changeable, yet not visible, as are our thoughts, and memories, and wills, and the whole incorporeal creature; but there is nothing that is visible that is not also changeable.[65]

Were Augustine simply arguing here from the claimed empirical fact that no visible entity whatsoever is immutable to God's invisibility, no (apparent) contradiction would thereby arise between the conceptions in the theological and the mystic literalist religious discourses about what is logically possible. It is (apparent) contradictions of this sort which are the primary concern of this essay. On the other hand, suppose, as I think is the case, that Augustine's argument is a logical point about the logical inconsistency of the supposition that a visible entity might also be immutable--entailing that the immutable being, God, is not visually sense perceptible. In this case, the mystic literalist can plausibly claim that God is one exception to this generally but not universally true (and therefore merely empirical) principle. He can claim this on the grounds that God has a proper sense-perceptible form yet the mutability of that form is not the mutability of God Himself.

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[65]Augustine, On the Trinity, Bk. III, Ch. 10.

In order to bring this point out, imagine that plays or ballets are immutable entities in the sense that they are defined such that any alteration of the script or choreography of each, respectively, would delimit a different play or ballet than originally existed. Then, while a particular play or ballet would itself be immutable, one could variously alter the performances of that play or ballet and still have proper performances of that specific play or ballet. That is, one would still have a set of performances such that viewing those differing performances is viewing the same identical play or ballet. In the same way instantiations of the proper sense-perceptible form of God could differ somewhat while remaining instantiations of the proper sense-perceptible form of the immutable entity, God.

Thus, if we feel that sense can be made of the notion that God has a proper sense-perceptible form, Augustine's argument is unsound; and if not, Augustine's argument, insofar as it is based on the presumed logical truth that every sense-perceptible object must also be a mutable object, is unsound given the above counterexample of the hypothetical immutable "plays" and "ballets" since, in seeing an accurate performance of one of these plays or ballets, one would see that play or ballet. On the other hand, disregarding for the moment this counterexample of plays and ballets, Augustine can object here that God has no proper sense-perceptible form. But if this objection is raised in this manner without being based on God's possession of immutability, then it is most fundamentally not God's immutability but that He logically can have no proper sense-perceptible form which makes it logically contradictory to suppose that He is sense percep-

tible. Augustine's argument, then, from God's immutability to His sense imperceptibility either fails or it is spurious because it simply reduces to the position that God has no proper sense-perceptible form.

The fundamental point of conflict, then, between the user of ordinary theological discourse and the user of the mystic literalist discourse reduces to this disagreement about whether there is a form which is the proper sense-perceptible form of God such that to see (touch, etc.) that form is to see (touch, etc.) God Himself. Augustine's denial (shared by Aquinas) that God has a proper sense-perceptible form, forces him to accept[66] something like E as an analogy to perceiving a visible form of God and thereby perceiving God Himself. But then the percipient will have no reasonable certitude of determining that the visible form which is perceived is a form of God in the sense that the mastodon costume in E is the costume worn by Richard, and this renders hollow claims to recognize God Himself during a theophany.

VIII

Turn briefly, then, to the question of whether or not angels are sense imperceptible. In those visions in which the apprehension of an angel is identified with the apprehension of God, the perception of angels will clearly not present a distinct problem from that arising with respect to the claimed perception of God and the considera-

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[66] Excepting those special cases which will be discussed in the next chapter in which it is simply part of the phenomenological content of a vision which the recipient has that God is an entity in the vision.

tions discussed above concerning Augustine's (and Aquinas's) treatment of this problem will apply, mutatis mutandis, to angelic epiphanies.

Insofar as angels are considered to be beings whose existence is distinct from that of God, the kinds of problems just discussed regarding the visible form in which God appears all recur respecting angels. Even though angels, considered as beings distinct from God, are often thought in the ordinary theological discourse to frequently assume or "borrow" bodies, they are, like God, incorporeal beings. Thomas, for instance, regards the sense-perceptible forms which angels assume, like the sensible form which God assumes, as only representing certain characteristics of the angel: "sensible bodies are so fashioned by angels as fittingly to represent the intelligible properties of angels."[67] As far as I can make out, Thomas thinks that in virtue of perceiving the epiphanic form of an angel one does not perceive the angel itself since the most that he feels that such bodies "are fashioned for" is

> to this end, that by such bodily organs the spiritual powers of the angels may be made manifest; just as by the eye the power of the angels' knowledge is pointed out, and other powers by the other members . . .[68]

More explicitly, Poulain declares in The Graces of Interior Prayer that when angels

> appear in a corporeal or imaginary vision, what we see is not really them, because they have no bodies. It is a borrowed form. And, in the same way, when we see another man, we do not really see his soul in his face.[69]

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[67]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Pt. I, Q. 51, Art. 2. In a similar vein, cf. Maimonides, Guide, Pt. I, Ch. 44 and Pt. II, Ch. 6.

[68]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Pt. I, Q. 51, Art. 3.

[69]Poulain, Graces, p. 301.

It can readily be seen that this contention that the sensible form of angels is not their proper sense-perceptible form will lead to the problem of the identification of angels in visions.

It seems to me that Poulain is mistaken, or at least misleading, in his assessment of our perception of other men. Under normal perceptual circumstances, when we perceive another person's body, we thereby perceive him, though even if we are dualists we do not refer to this as perceiving his "soul." Furthermore, we know that it is that particular person whom we perceive because of the conceptual connection between the perception of the person's body and the perception of the person. If this sort of conceptual connection is denied in the case of perceiving the body which an angel borrows and perceiving that angel, how will the percipient of the angelic form which is "not really the angel's form" have any reasonable certitude of determining that it is an angel, or a particular angel, which he is perceiving?

Again, this problem can be solved by conceiving of the form which an angel assumes as the proper sensible form of the angel such that perceiving that form is perceiving the angel, and by not conceiving of angelic forms as merely forms in virtue of which the percipient sees that an angel is present or that he has certain characteristics. That is, this problem can be solved if perceiving the body which an angel assumes and thereby perceiving the angel is thought of as modelled on the relationship which perceiving the body of a human being, on a dualist conception, has to perceiving the possessor of the body.

IX

It might be thought that the conflict between users of the theological and users of the mystic literalist discourses over whether God and angels have proper sense-perceptible forms only arises in the case of corporeal visions. It is not clear, after all, that there is a physical phenomenon--say a material body--which is literally perceived by the percipient of an imaginary (or intellectual) vision.

Though mystics deny that imaginary visions are like instances of ordinary imaginings, this denial is based on such considerations as that the percipient is not able, as he would be during ordinary imaginings, to manipulate the content of his perception at will and that the objects perceived are beyond the power of imagining. There is no inherent reason why imaginary visions might not involve mental images like, but differing in the foregoing respects from, those involved in ordinary cases of imagining. In fact St. John of the Cross says:

> It must be understood that beneath this term 'imaginary vision' we purpose to include all things which can be represented to the imagination supernaturally by means of any image, form, figure and species. For all the apprehensions and species which, through all the five bodily senses, are represented to the soul . . . may likewise occur after a supernatural manner, and be represented to it without any assistance of the outward senses. . . . [these images and species] differ not in their nature . . . from those which enter by the outward senses.[70]

Thomas seems to recognize that, for the user of the theological discourse, purported mental images in an imaginary vision of a sense-perceptible form of God present the same difficulties as pur-

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[70]St. John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel, trans. E. Allison Peers (Garden City, N.Y., 1958), Bk. II, Ch. 16:2, 3 (hereafter cited as St. John of the Cross, Ascent).

ported ordinary sense perceptions of a sense-perceptible form of Him during a corporeal vision. (Augustine also sometimes appears to recognize this: e.g. in Book XII, Chapter 2 of his Literal Commentary on Genesis.) Although, for instance, Thomas thinks that Isaiah's theophany of God as recorded in Isaiah 6 occurs during an imaginary, instead of a corporeal vision,[71] when he deals with assertions in the mystic discourse of perceiving God, he concurrently deals with instances of imaginary and corporeal visions.

In this regard, Thomas says that

> when a prophetic revelation is conveyed by images in the imagination, then there must be an abstraction from the senses, lest what is seen in imagination be taken for external sense-objects.[72]

and Augustine says that

> when in dreams or in ecstasy we experience images of bodies, we do not distinguish them from bodies at all, unless when a man, returning to his bodily senses, recognizes that [those images were not] derived from a bodily sense.[73]

As Aquinas and Augustine implicitly see, to perceive God in any sense by means of a mental image entails that some imagined physical form and some imagined sense qualities are perceived and, thus, entails that God could be seen in a corporeal vision by means of a similar physical form and similar sense qualities. Moreover, the objects imagined in mental images are both located in space and perceived from a physical point of view: one imagines one's best friend and in doing so

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[71] See also Augustine's Literal Commentary on Genesis, Bk. XII, Ch. 26 and St. Bernard, Sermons on the Song of Songs, Sermon 33, par. 6.

[72] Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Pt. II, II, Q. 173, Art. 3, cited from St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, ed. and trans. Roland Potter (London: Blackfriars, 1970), Vol. 45.

[73] Augustine, Literal Commentary on Genesis, Bk. XII, Ch. 2.

one imagines him, e.g., in front of one and seen from a three-quarters profile. In accordance with these two aspects of mental images, Teresa's description of her most famous ecstasy resembles common descriptions of ordinary imaginings in that she sees the Seraph "on her left side" and, apparently, from the front, since she describes seeing that "his face [was] burning."

Therefore, if God can be perceived by means of a mental image, and thus such that the "imagined" object is phenomenologically spatially located and observed from a point of view, then God could be perceived by means of a similar, literally existent physical phenomenon which was similarly but literally externally spatially located and literally viewed from a similar point of view. Hence the (apparent) contradictions discussed in this chapter between the theological and mystic literalist discourses which arise concerning the perception of God and angels in corporeal visions will recur with respect to imaginary visions.

The point of conflict, then, and the basis of any (apparent) logical contradiction which exists between the theological and mystic literalist language games with regard to both corporeal and imaginary visions (and intellectual visions insofar as they do involve images [see pp. 7-8]) is whether during these mystical experiences God Himself and angels themselves are sensibly perceived. This disagreement is specifically centered around the question of whether there is a proper sense-perceptible form of God and of each particular angel such that perceiving those forms counts as sensibly perceiving, respectively, God Himself or an angel itself. It is in their attempt to be

least disruptive to the orthodox theological doctrines that users of the theological discourse have denied this salient feature of the mystic literalist discourse that it is God Himself or an angel itself which is perceived in visions involving putative sense perceptions of these beings. It is worth noting again in summation that the mystic literalist position is not as disruptive to the orthodox theological positions as might be supposed.

Three crucial and central theological doctrines are not, as theologians have assumed, contradicted by the mystic literalist position. I have argued that the important theological doctrines of the infinitude and immutability of God are not contradicted by mystic literalist assertions of literal sense perceptions of God. Most significantly, the doctrine of God's and angels' incorporeality is not contradicted by the mystic literalist claims. The supposition, implied by the mystic literalist position, that these celestial beings have proper sense-perceptible forms, was modelled on the relationship which holds on a dualist conception between perceiving a person's body and perceiving that person. Plays can be sensibly perceived even though they are incorporeal; on the dualist conception, the person, who is identified with a soul or mind, is sense perceptible even though incorporeal since to perceive a person's body is, under normal circumstances, to perceive that person. Hence, assuming a vastly more transient relationship between God or angels and their proper sense-perceptible forms, there is no contradiction in suggesting that another incorporeal entity--God or an angel--is literally sensibly perceived when one perceives the appropriate proper sense-perceptible form. Thus formulation P_1 of the theological position will not count,

apart from its more specific reformulation as $\underline{P}_2$ or $\underline{P}_3$, against the mystic literalist position.

THREE

VISIONS, PICTURES, AND RULES

In delineating the central points of disagreement between the positions of the mystic literalist and the user of theological discourse, two major issues have been raised by the differences in their positions. First, can these two apparently contradictory positions be rendered conjointly compatible? Second, what elements of the structure of their perceptual experiences could enable the percipients of visions to have any reasonable certitude of correctly recognizing the beings in their visions? A third issue is raised by the fact that mystics tend in their visions to perceive personages or entities which are accorded a special religious significance in the mystic's own religious tradition while tending not to perceive personages or entities which are similarly religion specific to other religious traditions. What structural features of their perceptual experiences could explain why mystics tend during their visions to perceive entities which accord with the mystics' expectations?

In this chapter I will discuss these three issues by analyzing visions involving alleged sensory-like experiences of God and angels which do not entail any commitment by the participant to the actual existential status of the object, or perceived characteristics of the object, of the experience. I will attempt to (1) narrow the focus of the first issue by dispelling, for this limited range of visions, the

apparent linguistic deviance within the language game of ordinary religious discourse of mystic statements such as, "I have just seen (or touched) God (or an angel)," and (2) for this limited range of visions, offer answers to the second and third questions. This clarification of these three problematic features of visions will be made by recognizing and developing the similarities between the perceptions involved in visions and those involved in representational pictorial art and, to a lesser extent, dreams.

I

The following analysis of the perception of pictorial representations in art will operate importantly in developing parallels between the perceptions involved in visions and those involved in representational art.

Consider the class of percipients--call them the Articults--who claim that God and other celestial beings such as angels are depicted in religious representational art. An Articult, upon viewing the Sistine ceiling, may claim to "see God stretching his hand out to Adam during the creation." In this instance, such an utterance is not linguistically odd and is essentially no different from a person's claim that he "sees Socrates dying" when viewing David's painting The Death of Socrates.

In saying that he "sees Socrates," the person looking at The Death of Socrates is not thereby committing himself to any claim about the present existential status, or the character and acts, of the Greek philosopher depicted in the painting. Locutions such as "represents x," "depicts x," and "is a picture of x," are ambiguous as to

whether or not x exists (if an object) or is actual (if a state of affairs). Pictures of unicorns do not represent or depict real entities; a picture of a particular man might or might not represent or depict a real man or, if the man actually exists, real features of or facts about that man. Therefore, I will use locutions of the form, "represents x," "depicts x," and "is a picture of x," when x actually exists or (for states of affairs) actually obtains, and I will use locutions of the form, "x-representation," "x-depiction," and "x-picture," when no inference can be made from an appropriate usage of such locutions to the present existence or actuality of x.[1] Thus an Articult is not committed to the existence of God or God's hand when he says that he "sees God touching the hand of Adam," or when he says in ordinary discourse that there is a "representation of God creating Adam" on the Sistine ceiling, since he might mean by the latter merely that there is a God-representation on the Sistine ceiling.

Now, suppose an Articult approaches a representational painting entitled God and Nine Angels. There are ten humanoid figures in the painting. How is the Articult to know which figure is God-depicting? It might be the case that one of the ten figures is identifiable as God because one figure is a more fatherly type than the others, is larger than the others, is centrally located, is higher than the other figures, and is wearing a crown.[2]

Kendall Walton, in "Pictures and Make-Believe,"[3] has suggested

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[1] I follow Nelson Goodman's usage here. See Languages of Art (Indianapolis, 1968), pp. 22-23.

[2] Such devices are actually employed in medieval art to identify and distinguish divine beings.

[3] Kendall Walton, "Pictures and Make-Believe," Philosophical Review, July 1973, pp. 283-319.

that for a representational picture to be an x-depiction for a certain society it is necessary that there be a game of make-believe for that society such that by the rules of that game, "y exists" (where y is a name or identifying description) and "y is an x" are make-believedly true in virtue of certain properties which the picture literally possesses, and actions which are instances of literally perceiving the picture in various ways count as make-believedly performing various perceptual actions vis-a-vis x.[4] According to this account, by literally visually perceiving the splotches of paint on canvas which comprise The Death of Socrates, one sees, in virtue of the rules of a game of make-believe, that Socrates is make-believedly seated on a couch (obviously Socrates does not at any moment during which David's painting might be viewed actually sit on a couch in Athens). I will assume in this essay that Walton is correct (I think that he is correct) in this analysis of the role of rules of make-believe in making

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[4] Walton calls the truths which are apprehended in this manner (and the rules in virtue of which they are apprehended) make-believe truths (and rules of make-believe) rather than imaginary truths (and imaginary rules) for this reason. Propositions are imaginarily true just in case they are fictionally true in virtue of some fact which is entirely a fact about someone's imagining (or pretending, supposing, dreaming) that it is true. The make-believe truths of representational art, while fictionally true, are not entirely fictionally true in virtue of facts about someone's imagining, pretending, etc., but are, in part, fictionally true in virtue of facts about acts of perceptions (e.g. the perceiver literally looks at David's painting in order to make-believedly be looking at Socrates) and in virtue of facts about the physical configuration of the paint on the canvas.

Also, in order to adhere to Walton's characterization of the game of make-believe necessarily operative if a representational picture is to be an x-depiction for a certain society, the use of locutions like "make-believe X's," "X make-believedly being G," and (the act-descriptive locution) "make-believedly X-ing" should be strictly understood as denoting locutions with a sentential operator of the form "It is make-believedly true that . . ."

representational pictures x-depictions for a particular society.

Thus, on this account by literally visually perceiving certain splotches of paint in the hypothetical painting, God and Nine Angels, in virtue of which there make-believedly exists a largest, fatherly, crowned, etc., figure, the viewer make-believedly sees God--that is, it is make-believedly true that the viewer sees God--in virtue of the rule of make-believe that a representation of a make-believedly crowned, larger than, and more fatherly being than the beings represented by men-representations or angel-representations is a God-representation. Because such rules of make-believe operate in representational art, we feel that it would not be "right" for God to be represented as the figure of smallest physical stature in comparison to the angels or to be represented as a young man while the angels are represented as more mature personages. (Notice that it is not the case that, in virtue of rules of make-believe, the physical configurations of the painting themselves count as figures of God and angels: the physical painting is not itself part of the make-believe world and while it is in virtue of the particular physical configurations of the painting that the painting is a God-and-angels-depiction, those configurations are not themselves identical with the make-believe figures of which, because of the operative rules of make-believe, they are x-depictions.)

The game of make-believe for religious, as well as most, representational art tends to be reasonably straightforward. God is "Our Father in Heaven"; God-representations are commonly older-man-depictions rather than youth-depictions. God is "King of Kings"; a God-depiction may be a make-believedly crowned figure. God is

ascribed great power; a God-depiction may be a figure that is make-believedly of physically greater stature than the figures in the same painting which are make-believe created beings. And so on.

However, the rules of make-believe need not be straightforward and simple for representational religious art, and they may be especially abstruse for those attributes of celestial beings which are particularly difficult to represent pictorially in any straightforward fashion. For instance, in Tintoretto's The Last Supper one apparently operative rule of make-believe is that make-believe beings with wings which are depicted as filmy creatures floating in the air are make-believedly incorporeal beings (namely angels). In contrast, in the Sistine ceiling incorporeal-angel-representations appear to be representations of make-believe corporeal beings who are as solid as the make-believedly existent humans represented there.[5] The rule operative here seems to be that winged-being-representations are angel-representations whether or not those beings appear to have a filmy exterior.[6]

Finally, there cannot, in our system of representation, be a

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[5]Sculpture offers a somewhat more restrictive medium for the representation of the incorporeality of the entities depicted. We can see, though, that for instance in Bernini's sculpture of the ecstasy of St. Teresa, the operative rules of make-believe are similar to those involved in the Sistine ceiling incorporeal-angel-representations. In Bernini's sculpture literally solid forms are cloud-depictions and ray-of-light-depictions and the incorporeal-angel-representation appears to be a representation of a make-believe corporeal being which possesses the same apparent solidity as the make-believedly existent earthly-life-Teresa.

[6]It might be that in the former case incorporeal beings which were present but invisible to the participants in the Last Supper are being represented while in the latter case incorporeal beings which are visible--perhaps because they have assumed bodies--are represented.

God-*simpliciter* (or angel-simpliciter)-representation in representational art. There cannot be such a representation for the same general reason that there cannot, in our system of representation, be a Jones-simpliciter-representation. A particular man, Jones, is many things--a human being, perhaps a plumber, a father, the head of the AFL-CIO, a cigar-smoker--and, moreover, can erroneously be believed to be, or just imagined as, myriad other things--perhaps a military leader or an Oxford don. A Jones-representation in representational art has to be a representation of Jones *as* one or more of these sorts of things: Jones cannot be depicted *simply as Jones*. In the same manner, in a God-representation or angel-representation in representational art, the being in question must be represented *as* something other than simply as God or an angel--e.g. God might be represented as Creator or Father of us all or Ruler of the universe or greatest conceivable being. Thus it is not, for example, a defect of the Merode Altarpiece that in the center panel Annunciation the Holy Spirit-representation, (by the rules of make-believe) an angel-like figure carrying a cross and descending on a shaft of light, does not represent the Holy Spirit simply as the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is thus represented, perhaps, as like Christ (signified by the cross) and incorporeal (signified by the angelic figure transported by light). Just as Jones might be represented by a plumber-representation, the Holy Spirit (if He exists) is here represented by a cross-carrying-angel-representation and cannot be represented without being represented as something other than simply *as the Holy Spirit*.

II

Pictures depict make-believe truths in virtue of a game(s) of rules of make-believe in which the viewer is a knowing participant. In a number of important respects, certain visions are like x-representations in representational painting and these parallels suggest that a set of (implicit) rules analogous to the rules of make-believe in representational art is operative in those visions.

(i) Although the person who has experienced a religious vision may claim (and in most instances does claim) that it was a vision of an actually existent being--e.g. God or Christ or an angel--he need not make such a claim. Indeed, if an educated twentieth-century man said that he had a vision of a unicorn or a chimera, he (ordinarily) would presumably not want to be thereby committed to claiming that such beings actually exist. It has already been seen that the percipient of an x-depiction in representational art similarly does not commit himself to the present existence of x when he claims to "see x" in looking at the x-depiction. Parallelling the distinction between, e.g., "x-representation" and "representation of x," "x-vision" will be used to denote a vision of an entity the actual existence or characteristics or actions of which cannot be inferred from the occurrence of the vision, and the locution, "vision of x," will be used to denote a vision of an entity which actually exists or the characteristics or actions of an entity which actually obtain.

(ii) Corresponding to the make-believe truths of representational art, visions convey visionary truths. In the same way in which

make-believe truths in pictorial representations are not truths about the physical painting, visionary truths, as they will be understood in this essay, are not truths about visions in the sense of being characterizations of visions--such as stating their duration--but are truths of the vision, the truths conveyed or presented in the vision--e.g. that there was (in a particular vision) some certain number of angels who spoke such and such words, etc. Also visionary truths, as I will be using this notion, must be distinguished from the interpretation or "meaning" of a vision: e.g. Pharoah and King Saul understood the visionary truths of their visions, that is they were cognizant of the actual features of their visions, but Joseph and David needed to interpret, give the "meaning" of, their visions for them. Like make-believe truths, visionary truths are not necessarily, though they might be, literal truths. Parallelling the usage of "make-believe," "visionary X's," "X visionally being G," and the act-descriptive locution "visionally X-ing" should be strictly understood as denoting locutions with a sentential operator of the form, "It is a visionary truth that . . ."

Call those people who claim to have visions in which they perceive visionary truths Mysticults. During many visions, Mysticults must know that they are having a vision in order to perceive the visionary facts presented in the vision. St. Francis, had he not been prepared as he was for a visionary experience of Christ, might have thought, upon seeing a six-winged creature apparently floating through the air toward him, that he was hallucinating an exceedingly poor phantasmic representation of Pegasus.[7] St. Teresa describes, in Chap-

[7]One difference, I take it, between hallucinations and visions

ter 7 of her Life, a general problem which arises if the participant does not know that he is perceiving a vision:

> Christ stood before me, stern and grave . . . I saw Him with the eyes of the soul [i.e. it was an imaginary vision] more distinctly than I could have seen Him with the eyes of the body. . . . It did me much harm that I did not then know it was possible to see any thing otherwise than with the eyes of the body . . . [Satan] made me understand it to be impossible, and suggested that I had imagined the vision--that it might be Satan himself.

Here Teresa points out that if the percipient does not realize that he is experiencing a vision he will not know that he is apprehending visionary truths and might think that he is only imagining things or

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is that propositions expressing the contents of the hallucinator's perceptions are usually false, if taken literally, while visions might or might not be veridical. If one is a member of the appropriate religious community, he will either think that visions of those religious objects whose existence he believes in are veridical or, at most, suspend judgment about the literal truth or falsity of the visionary truths of such visions. He would suspend his judgment only because, e.g., he thinks that what he takes to be a vision is not one but is, perhaps, a deception of Satan, or because, being a user of the theological discourse, he thinks that while he literally hears an angel's words and sees the angel's borrowed body, he does not literally see the angel itself. Hallucinations could be veridical--i.e. in those instances where hallucinatory "facts" happen to agree with actual facts (there really is a pink elephant in the corner of the room though the percipient is too bleary-eyed to be able to see it)--but hallucinations are for the most part regarded as false by everyone except the hallucinator himself (and often even by him) at the moment at which he suffers the hallucination. In particular, while all visionary truths might be literally true--that is, it might be literally true both that the percipient perceives state of affairs S and that S obtains--even though the state of affairs perceived in a hallucination could also be an actual state of affairs, it cannot be both hallucinatorily and literally true that one perceives that state of affairs.

This is not, of course, a cheap way of assuring the veridicality of a purported vision. If visions are defined within religious communities as, on the whole, veridical experiences, then the question of the veracity of a particular experience will simply be pushed back to the question of whether or not that experience is properly a vision or a hallucination.

might think that he is apprehending Y instead of, in a vision, apprehending X.

One must be a knowing participant in the relevant game of make-believe in order to see or come to know the make-believe truths which are presented in representational art, and, in order to knowingly participate in the game of make-believe operative in representational art, one must know that one is perceiving a piece of representational art. Analogously, the fact that in some visions one must know that one is perceiving a vision in order to perceive the visionary truths which are presented in it suggests that one must be a knowing participant in the relevant game of rules in order to perceive those visionary truths.[8] People unfamiliar with representational art, and thereby unacquainted with the relevant rules of make-believe, will not make-believedly see God stretching His hand out to Adam when they first see the Sistine ceiling; people who have not previously experienced visions often do not understand the first vision they experience--on the view suggested here for certain visions, they do not know the rules of the relevant game(s) of rules which are necessary for the comprehension of the features of the vision. This might be indicated by Julian of Norwich's statement near the end of her Revelations that:

> On the very day that it happened, when the vision had passed, I . . . denied it, and said quite openly that I had raved. But mercifully our Lord Jesus would not let it dis-

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[8]This does not mean that the person experiencing a vision is conscious of inferring visionary truths by means of these vision rules. Walton suggests that a painting is an x-depiction for a certain society only if the make-believe facts of the representation are determined without explicitly inferring them from the relevant properties of the picture and the rules (Walton, op. cit.). Vision rules similarly may be highly internalized.

> appear, but showed it all over again within my soul in greater detail . . . as if to say . . . "understand it now . . ."[9]

No one "makes up" these vision rules which I am postulating any more than one painter contrived all the rules of make-believe operative in representational art. Perhaps such vision rules are in part acquired during the extensive preparatory exercises and discipleship common to the mystical tradition. Like the gradual development of rules of make-believe in art, these vision rules would slowly evolve as the same Mysticult, and communities of Mysticults, saw more and more visions. Possibly this evolution of vision rules helps explain why early Jewish recipients of visions apparently did not distinguish an appearance of an angel from an appearance of God Himself, whereas later recipients of visions, perhaps perceiving very similar phenomena, saw beings, angels, whose existence and appearance was distinct from God's (see pp. 31-32).

In representational painting, the artist's intent does not rigidly define what make-believe truths can be conveyed by the painting. The artist may, e.g., intend to have the eyes of a figure convey surprise, yet it may be as correct to make-believedly see awe or fear in the expression of the eyes--or, in the more extreme case where the artist is not sufficiently skilled, the eyes may not convey anything even like surprise. It is true, though, that certain more gross make-believe features of a painting could not correctly be considered make-believedly false by the viewer. It cannot be make-believedly true that the central figure in The Death of Socrates is Aristotle or a

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[9]Julian of Norwich, Revelations, Ch. 70 (italics mine).

woman.

Likewise, it seems most plausible to me that in visions in which vision rules are operative there would not be, for the most part, only a single, rigid set of rules correctly applicable to a specific vision. Two percipients of the same vision could correctly understand some of the finer details of the visionary truths differently. That is, what they take to be the visionary truths could be different yet both percipients be correct in the sense that neither would be acquiring beliefs which controverted the visionary truths which God intended the vision to convey. For visions, I take it, do differ from representational art in this respect--whatever visionary truths God, unlike the artist vis-a-vis painting, intends a vision to convey are the correct visionary truths to be inferred from the vision. If God presents a vision of St. Peter, then it is visionally true that St. Peter can be perceived. Yet I see no reason to suppose that there could not be considerable latitude in the visionary truths which God intends to be conveyed: in some particular vision of St. Peter, God may not care whether it is understood that--and hence it would be equally correct to suppose that--it is visionally true that Peter is appearing in the midst of steam or that he is appearing in the midst of the clouds.

Also, there is another reason why the set of rules of make-believe or vision rules operative, respectively, in a representational painting or vision will not be rigid. Consider two different acts of perceiving a painting or vision where each perceptual act involves a different make-believe or vision rule. Suppose a different set of features of the painting or vision is perceived during each of the two

acts. For the two different make-believe or vision rules, literally perceiving the different sets of features of the painting or vision could count as make-believedly or visionally perceiving the same make-believe or visionary truth. In both representational painting and visions it is, I take it, for the most part more important which make-believe or visionary truths the percipient perceives than precisely which set of make-believe rules or vision rules is used to arrive at those truths.

Before discussing several more parallels between x-visions and x-depictions in representational art, it is worth noting that the foregoing parallels will help explain why another feature of visions which might appear to be a difference between visions and representational art does not constitute a difference.

What is metaphorically true, like what is make-believedly true, depends on what is literally true. For example, it is metaphorically true that Richard is lion-hearted only if it is literally true that Richard possesses certain properties--e.g. Richard is fierce or fearless. Yet while metaphors serve principally to illuminate or describe facts about the real world, Walton has suggested that what is make-believedly true is principally "of interest in its own right."[10] Insofar as Walton is right about this, in numerous instances visionary truths are more like metaphorical truths than like make-believe truths in this respect. For the percipient of visions who is a believing theist and who believes that his visions are veridical, the import of

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[10]Walton, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

mystical visions is often what they tell him about actual religious truths about God or Christ or angels (which he takes to be really existent). Granted, visionary truths may, for example, lead the recipient to change his moral life, but presumably it would not be because of the visionary truths in themselves that he would change his moral life. Rather it is because he believes those visionary truths to be truths about the actual world, that is because he both believes his visions to be visions of x's and not merely x-visions and, for the relevant features, believes that x actually possesses the properties x is depicted in the visions as having, that he would change his moral reasoning and actions.

However, due to the usual concomitant religious commitment of the percipient, it may be a peculiar feature of religious visions that religious visionary truths are like metaphorical truths and unlike make-believe truths in this manner. If there are recurrent non-religious visions, where the perceiver believes that he is merely having x-visions and not visions of x's, they could well be of interest to the percipient purely in themselves, just as the make-believe truths of pictorial representations are of interest, just in themselves, to an art cognoscente. Furthermore, it is not true, for instance, of the make-believe truths of the religious representational art of the Middle Ages that they are principally of interest in their own right. The representational art of this period was importantly didactic in purpose and the actual religious facts it was intended to convey were at least as important as the correspondent make-believe facts.

Thus, while religious visionary truths are more like metaphor-

ical truths than like the make-believe truths of non-religious representational art insofar as their usual primary cognitive significance[11] lies in what they tell one about the real world, (1) the visionary truths of non-religious visions, which would, I take it, often mostly be of interest in themselves, are more like the make-believe truths of much non-religious representational art[12] than like metaphorical truths, and (2) religious visionary truths are similar to the make-believe truths of (most) religious representational art, rather than being similar to metaphorical truths, in that their principal cognitive interest is their illumination of facts about the actual world (or about what are taken to be actually existent beings such as God and angels). Since this essay is concerned with religious visions, the visionary truths discussed here will be like make-believe truths in most religious (and a great deal of non-religious) representational art in that their principal cognitive significance is their illumination of facts about the actual world, though claims to perceive the visionary truths of the visions considered here do not necessarily commit the percipient to any correspondent literal truths.

(iii) The likelihood that vision rules are operative in certain visions is also supported by the fact that perceivers of visions

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[11]Religious visions frequently have an important non-cognitive significance. St. John of the Cross even regards such effects as more important than the cognitive value of visions. (See St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Bk. II, Ch. 24).

[12]This similarity between non-religious visions and non-religious representational art breaks down vis-a-vis certain classes of non-religious representational art. For example, the depiction of actual facts in many secular portraits is as important, or more important, than the presentation of the correspondent make-believe facts.

can be mistaken about the visionary truths they perceive in a manner similar to the way in which viewers of representational art can be mistaken about the make-believe truths contained in the pictures they look at. Even while fully aware of the relevant features of, respectively, a painting or vision, a perceiver might say: "I thought that was Abraham. Now I see that that is God touching the hand of Adam"; "I thought I was having a vision of a seraph which had the form of a crucified man, but now I realize that it is a vision of Christ." Mistaking God for Abraham on the Sistine ceiling when fully aware of the relevant features of the fresco could be the result of misapplying the relevant rules of make-believe--for example thinking that a light-bearded, fatherly figure in certain circumstances counts as Abraham (where, perhaps, the make-believe rule is that only splotches of paint that make-believedly count as representing figures with dark beards can make-believedly count as Abraham). Regarding visions, St. John of the Cross adminishes novices not to be deceived in visions by "interpreting them according to their apparent sense and literally"[13] (This is most directly akin to wondering, on viewing the Sistine ceiling, who is the rotund individual touching the hand of Adam.) Mistakes in what the perceiver takes to be the visionary truths of a vision could come from the misapplication of, or partial lack of application of, the relevant vision rules.

Significantly, while such misidentifications, when the perceiver is fully aware of the relevant features of the perceived object, are unlikely to occur during ordinary sense perception of an

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[13]St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Bk. II, Ch. 19, par. 5.

entity which we can recognize non-inferentially--e.g. a friend's face--mistaken identifications do often occur, even when we are fully aware of the relevant features of the object in question, in those instances of ordinary sense perception in which we inferentially recognize the object we perceive. Thus, a novice ornithologist may mistakenly identify a certain bird as a crow from the general size, the black color, the heavy bill, etc., and then remember that because of the wedge-shaped tail the bird should be classified as a raven. Rules could be constructed which disjoin those sets of features each set of which is sufficient to identify and classify each of these two bird species. Crows and ravens are similar enough that two such rules would be alike. The similarity of these rules would lead to their easy misapplication by beginners who would be (implicitly) using those rules in the study of ornithology. This greater likelihood of misidentifications in perceptions involving inferential recognition rather than non-inferential recognition implies the use of rules in those visions during which it is also the case that misidentifications of the perceived objects (and inferential recognitions) are likely.

(iv) The make-believe world of representational art and the visionary world are not simply products of the perceiver's imagination. Were it the case that for each vision the visionary world was simply a product of the percipient's imagination, then vision rules could not be operative in any visions since visionary states of affairs would not obtain because of facts about literally perceiving, but only because of facts about the percipient's imaginings, pretendings, etc. Not only, though, do visionary states of affairs obtain

because of facts about literal perceptions, parallelling the functioning of rules of make-believe in representational art, but the visionary world cannot simply be a product of the percipient's imagination since the perceiver can, as pointed out above, be mistaken about the make-believe and visionary facts about these worlds. We cannot be mistaken about what we are imagining. Also, that these make-believe and visionary worlds are not merely products of the perceiver's imagination is entailed by the fact that participants cannot, as they can the world of imagination, even partially manipulate at will either the make-believe world of representational art or the visionary world. (By "manipulate at will" I mean manipulate solely by acts of will: e.g. manually moving physical objects about within one's field of view so as to affect make-believe truths is not manipulating the make-believe world at will in the sense intended here).

Evelyn Underhill suggests[14] that the occurrence of an imaginary vision is simply an instance of the use of the "imaginative faculty." But besides the fact that visions cannot be equivalent to imaginings for the reasons just given, Underhill's position directly controverts explicit descriptions of some visions. For instance, St. Teresa says: "As to the vision of which I am speaking there is no means of bringing it about . . . and there is no possibility of taking anything away from it, or of adding anything to it."[15] Genuine visions are, by definition in the western theistic tradition, given

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[14]Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, p. 285.

[15]St. Teresa, Life, Ch. 29:1. St. Teresa was particularly adamant that visions are not merely products of the imagination. See further Life, Ch. 9:6-7; Ch. 28:16; Ch. 38:3; Rel. 9:26; and The Interior Castle, Sixth Mansions, Ch. 9.

to the percipient by God and are not perceptual phenomena which the recipient can either initiate alone or manipulate at will: "the soul may wish to see more than is pictured to it, but there is no way in which it may do so, nor is it possible that it should; so I never on any occasion saw more than the Lord was pleased to show me."[16]

(v) In many visions, the visionary world is different from the real world just as the make-believe world of representational art is different from the real world. Unicorns and chimeras can make-believedly exist in representational art, and God and angels can visionally exist as corporeal beings in a painting or in a vision. But unicorns, chimeras, and God and angels, as they are understood in ordinary theological religious discourse, do not exist, qua sense-perceptible beings, in the real world. As we have seen, Maimonides makes this point about visions (though he extends it to <u>all</u> visions) when he cautions the religious that "the ordinary reader [mistakenly] believes that the acts, journeys, questions and answers of the prophets really took place, and were perceived by the senses, and did not merely form part of a prophetic vision."[17]

The fact that both the make-believe world of representational art and, often, the visionary world are different from our actual every-day world together with the <u>way</u> in which these make-believe and, in certain cases, visionary worlds are perceived indicates that there is a game(s) of vision rules operative in certain visions. It would be by means of this game(s) of vision rules that one perceives

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[16]St. Teresa, <u>Life</u>, Ch. 38.

[17]Maimonides, <u>Guide</u>, Bk. II, Ch. 46.

the visionary world much in the same way that it is in virtue of a game(s) of rules of make-believe that one perceives the truths of the make-believe world of representational art. The mystic claim that the truths of the visionary world are perceived by means of literal perceptions parallels the feature of x-depictions in representational art that literal acts of perceiving a pictorial representation in certain ways count (in virtue of the operative rules of make-believe) as make-believedly perceiving the facts of the make-believe world in certain ways.

In order to elucidate these features which certain visions share with representational pictorial art, it will be necessary to analyze in some detail the extent to which literal sense perceptions are involved in visions. We can think of literal perceptions, or genuine sense perceptions, as perceptual acts in which we acquire information about our bodies and environment by means of the proper objects of the senses--e.g. colors, shapes, timbres, tastes. In thinking of sense perception in this way, particular smells and sounds, for example, are not external states of affairs but (while caused by external states of affairs) are phenomenological items.[18] Thus I think that insofar as perceptual acts are considered as the acquisition of information about our bodies and environment "by means of" the proper objects of the senses, they can equivalently be regarded as an acquisition of information about our bodies and environment which phenomenologically involves the proper objects of the

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[18] If I hear a piano-like middle C, my perceptual act is an occurrent awareness of propositions about a piano-like middle C. The factual referents of those propositions are external sound waves. (See p. 143 f.)

senses. So, by "literal perception," "genuine sense perception," and similar locutions, I will refer to genuine acts of perception which phenomenologically involve the proper objects of the senses. (Although literal acts of sense perception involve the proper objects of the senses, all of the phenomenological content[19] of literal acts of sense perception need not involve the proper objects of the senses.)

Even when mystics explicitly refer to the literal use of their five exterior senses in corporeal visions (which involve, phenomenologically, the proper objects of the senses), it is not clear whether corporeal visions involve genuine acts of sense perception. For an act to be a genuine act of sense perception there must be a perception of an existent object which it is logically possible to perceive by means of the proper objects of the senses. This holds even in instances of sense perception in which all the beliefs the perceiver acquires about the objects of his perception are false. Thus we think that it is impossible to literally perceive the number three because the number three cannot actually be perceived by means of the proper objects of the senses. The accounts of the mystics do not always indicate whether there is a physical object or phenomenon, such as God's proper sense-perceptible form, that is perceptible by means of the proper objects of the senses, which is perceived in corporeal visions. Yet there is good supporting evidence to this effect.

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[19] As in Chapter Four, by the "phenomenological content" of our experiences I refer to the experience as it is ordered by our conceptual schemas and not to the unordered, pre-experience "booming, buzzing confusion."

Perceived visions are often public events perceived by more than one observer and this suggests that there are external physical phenomena corresponding to the objects in the vision which are literally perceived in numerous corporeal visions. In his discussion of corporeal visions, St. John of the Cross seems to refer explicitly to such external physical phenomena when he says that the "soul must not allow its eyes to rest upon that outer husk--namely, figures and objects set before it supernaturally. These may be presented to the exterior senses."[20]

Percipients must literally look at external physical objects during many perceived visions and again this indicates that there is an external state of affairs which is perceived and that the perception is a genuine sense perception. Thus, St. Teresa relates that in a vision Christ once took the cross of her rosary and returned it enlaid with four large stones which Teresa could always see after that;[21] the ring which Christ gave to St. Catherine of Siena during her "mystical marriage" "ever remained on her finger, not indeed in the sight of others, but only in the sight of the virgin herself";[22] Julian of Norwich says that as she lay in bed looking (literally) at the (actual) crucifix held before her by a priest, "I saw with my own eyes in the face of the crucifix hanging before me and at which I was ceaselessly gazing something of his passion . . . there were times when I wanted to look away from the [actual] cross, [but] . . . I

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[20]St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Bk. II, Ch. 7:9.

[21]St. Teresa, Life, Ch. 29:8.

[22]Edmund Gardner, St. Catherine of Siena (London, 1907), p. 26.

knew that while I gazed on the cross I was safe and sound";[23] Angela of Foligno "beheld Christ in the consecrated Host as a child";[24] and as was discussed above, Isaiah and Amos are looking at an altar (Isaiah 6, Amos 9) and Ezekiel is looking at a rain storm (Ezekiel 1) when each sees God in a vision.

One must literally look <u>at</u> the actually existent canvas to see the make-believe entities depicted in a certain painting. These mystics must literally look at an actual crucifix, altar, etc., in order to have a vision of the visionary objects associated with these real objects. Why does it make any difference <u>what</u> actual objects they look at to see those visionary objects? The resemblance which many visions have with representational painting suggests three possibilities. The first is that, although it is not evident from the accounts, there <u>was</u> a physical phenomenon, which was perceived by these mystics in their perceptions of the stones, ring, the Passion, Christ and God, on or near the surface of Teresa's crucifix, Catherine's ring finger, the storm Ezekiel was looking at, etc., which would correspond to the splotches of paint on the canvas of a work of representational art. A second possibility is that in some cases there are vision rules to the effect that during a vision perceiving certain natural phenomena counts as perceiving certain visionary truths. Here the crucifix, altar, or storm are the existent perceptible objects the perception of which makes the perceptual acts genuine acts of sense perception. This would be similar to a pos-

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[23]Julian of Norwich, <u>Revelations</u>, Chs. 10, 12, and 19.

[24]Angela of Foligno, <u>Consolation</u>, p. 229.

sible rule of make-believe such that when a picture frame is put around certain natural objects, literally perceiving those objects would then count as certain make-believe acts of perception. Third, there may be no external physical object which in the vision exactly corresponds to the splotches of paint on canvas, yet visionary truths may be perceived in virtue of literal perceptions which are made possible by some additional physical phenomena.

In order to explain this third possibility as well as generally to investigate the sense in which a sense-perceptible object must be perceived for acts of perception during visions to count as genuine acts of perception, consider Anton Poulain's distinction among what he thinks are the four concurrent types of causes of corporeal visions:[25] (1) the actual object of the vision is the actual body or physical object of the personage, etc. literally perceived by means of the external senses in the vision, (2) the actual object is an actual body but not the body actually belonging to the personage perceived in the vision (e.g. angels, having no bodies, "borrow" bodies), (3) there is no physical substance--e.g. a body--but only a physical phenomenon such as luminous rays which produce an irradiation of the retina (which, if the object in question has an actual body, might be exactly similar to the irradiation of the retina which might be produced by light reflected by the actual, though not present, body of the figure seen in the vision), and (4) God or angels "imprint the image" of the object of the vision directly on the retina of the percipient.[26] (3) and especially (4) could be the

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[25]Poulain, Graces, p. 314.

[26]The perception of the proper sense-perceptible form of God

sorts of perception occurring in those corporeal visions where it is not evident that there are any unusual external perceptible phenomena which correspond to the splotches of paint on canvas in their conveyance, respectively, of visionary and make-believe truths.

(1) and (2) are clear cases of genuine visual perception. Visions in which these two sorts of perception occur will, like perceptions of the make-believe truths in representational art, involve literal acts of sense perception. The sort of perception suggested in (3) is similar to the common, ordinary sense perception of a movie--except for the presence of a screen--or to that of an image produced by a hologram. Visions involving this sort of perception will then also involve acts of literal sense perception. The fourth alternative, though, might not be a case of visual perception since it is not clear that there is a suitably-positioned actual perceptible entity being perceived. It is a corruption of our ordinary language meaning of "see" to suggest that during visual perception one is literally perceiving irradiations of one's retina. Furthermore, the suggestion that a mystic has <u>genuine</u> visual perceptions when his retina is directly stimulated by incorporeal beings is essentially no different than the suggestion, nonsensical I think within our <u>present</u> language game concerning perception, that electrodes attached to the optic nerves might cause one to <u>genuinely see</u>, and not just metaphorically see, without the use of one's eyes.[27]

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or of an angel could be subsumed under (1), (2), or (4).

[27]It is interesting to note that on the sort of analysis of perception offered by D. M. Armstrong in <u>A Materialist Theory of the Mind</u>--viz. perception is fundamentally the acquisition of beliefs

Suppose, though, that it became common for people to be fitted at an early age with radar apparatus on top of their heads which produced experiences phenomenologically involving the proper objects of the senses and which conveyed information about states of affairs commonly perceived visually--e.g. the distance, shape, etc., of objects in front of the person. And suppose that this information was conveyed by stimulating the retinas through electric probes. Our concept of "visual perception" would undoubtedly be broadened to include, as a primary and not parasitic case, such instances of "seeing." To my mind this increased extension of the terms "visual perception" and "seeing" (and, more generally, "sense perception") would not fundamentally alter the meaning of these terms.

Similarly, if the retinas of certain members of our language community were commonly stimulated directly, apart from the usual irradiation by light reflected from objects, in a manner which gave the recipients, by means of the proper objects of the senses, reasonably reliable[28] data about the "visual" appearance of objects, the term "visual perception" could, without fundamentally altering the logic of the term, be extended to cover this class of experiences. So, even though in our present language game of perception, case (4) is at best a strained, parasitic use of "visual perception," there is

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about the percipient's body and environment, the causal efficacy of the senses themselves being irrelevant (pp. 208-213)--case (4) will be an instance of genuine perception.

[28]The data acquired in this manner would have to be reliable, i.e. generally true, in order for the hypothesized direct stimulation of the retina to count as an instance of genuine perception, since perception terms are conceptually tied to a relatively frequent success in attempted acts of perception (exemplified by the perception locution "to perceive [e.g. see] that x").

no incoherency in the notion that in the mystics' language game concerning perception (4) could be an instance of genuine visual perception.

I will not pursue this point further, however, since one difficulty which must be resolved to show conclusively whether mystics do or do not genuinely perceive visionary objects in cases like (4) is beyond the scope of this essay. We would need to determine whether corporeal visions are generally veridical, and reliable guides, concerning facts about the external world which correspond to visionary truths: i.e. facts about the external world such as whether Christ really is present and is speaking to the percipient when in a vision He seems to be present and speaking to the percipient, or whether there really is a physical body or a luminescence near the altar where Amos sees God. Of the four classes of corporeal visions, though, which Poulain distinguishes by their type of cause, even (4) might involve literal perceptual acts. When mystics look <u>at</u> natural objects during their visions, if there is no additional physical phenomenon (which would correspond in the case of painting to the splotches of paint on canvas), the perception of which counts as the perception of the visionary entities, then (3) and (4) could be the types of perception involved and the visions would involve genuine acts of sense perception.

Insofar as the percipients do in fact perceive existent, perceptible entities, some corporeal visions of types (1)-(3) and possibly (4) will simply involve instances of ordinary sense perception.[29] Some corporeal visions of all four types might also involve

[29]Visions which simply involve ordinary sense perception will

perceptions of another sort--namely visionary acts of perception given the operation of an appropriate set of vision rules. With respect to this latter set of corporeal visions, visionary perceptions of visionary entities and facts are strictly parallel to make-believe perceptions of the make-believe entities and facts of representational art in this important respect: these visionary perceptions will be like make-believe perceptions insofar as literal acts of perceiving (or, in case (4) of corporeal visions, what can plausibly be taken as literal acts of perception) count as other sorts of perceiving--viz. make-believe or visionary acts of perception.

In imaginary visions mystics commonly talk about perceptual acts[30] which correspond to the use of the five "interior" or "spiritual" senses.[31] Shapes, timbres, tastes, etc. are phenomenologically involved in the perceptions of imaginary visions. But there will be no genuine acts of sense perception in an imaginary vision unless there is an existent, perceptible entity which is perceived by

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be the subject of the discussion in the following three chapters.

[30]See Poulain, Graces, pp. 88-90. In particular, Poulain insists that the perceptual acts of the interior senses are not to be construed as merely metaphorically being acts of perception.

[31]The seventeenth-century figures Ven. Louis du Pont and Alvarez de Paz say, respectively,

> the spirit . . . has five interior acts corresponding to these senses, which we call seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching spiritually, with which it perceives the invisible and delectable things of Almighty God. (Ven. Louis du Pont, Méditations, Introduction, par. XI, cited in Poulain, Graces, p. 101)

and

> eyes are given unto the soul by which she may see God. . . . God manifests Himself to the soul by an image that represents Him very perfectly. (Alvarez de Paz, Works, Bk. V, Pt. III, Ch. 14, cited in Poulain, Graces, p. 282)

Cf. also St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Bk. II, Ch. 16:2.

means of the proper objects of the senses by these spiritual senses.[32]

St. Teresa says in her discussion of her imaginary visions:

> Now and then it seemed to me that what I saw was an image; but most frequently it was not so. I thought it was Christ Himself judging by the brightness in which He was pleased to show Himself. . . . there is the same difference here that there is between a living subject and the portrait thereof, neither more nor less: for if what I saw was an image, it was a living image,--not a dead man, but the living Christ.[33]

Here Teresa seems to hold the view that what is sometimes referred to as the "image" in imaginary visions is itself the actual mind-independent ostensible object of the vision, and that this object is a sense-perceptible object. On the other hand, the images in imaginary visions may be simply images, as suggested by St. John of the Cross:

> It must be understood that beneath this term 'imaginary vision' we purpose to include all things which can be represented to the imagination supernaturally by means of any image, form, figure and species. . . . even as the five outward senses represent the images and species of their objects to these inward senses, even so, supernaturally, as we say, without using the outward senses, both God and the devil can represent the same images and species.[34]

Also, it was pointed out above (pp. 7-8) that some intellectual visions may involve images.

I have argued that the extension of the locution "visual per-

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[32]It must be remembered that mystics claim that visions are not mere imaginings and therefore they should not on that ground be excluded from the class of genuine acts of perception. The second type of vision is designated as "imaginary" not because of the use of the imagination but because of the presence of visual images and/or their counterparts for the other four senses.

[33]St. Teresa, Life, Ch. 28:11-12.

[34]St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Bk. II, Ch. 16:2-3.

ception" could be broadened, without fundamentally altering the meaning of this term, to include instances of visionary "perception" in which the five external senses are not causally efficacious. The important feature about the radar apparatus example offered in support of that position is that, despite the fact that the five external senses are not causally efficacious, the percipient acquires, by means of the proper objects of the senses and the perception of actually present sense-perceptible objects, relatively reliable data about actual external states of affairs. The precise causal mechanism involved in the perceptual act does not matter.[35]

In view of that suggestion, imaginary visions on either St. Teresa's or St. John's account, and any intellectual visions involving images, could, even though they do not include the use of the five external senses, involve genuine acts of perception if the following three conditions obtain. Just as the observer of a piece of representational art commits genuine perceptual acts because his perceptual acts provide reliable data about the configuration of the paint on canvas, these visions will involve genuine perceptual acts if (a) reliable data is acquired about external objects or states of affairs,[36] (b) in virtue of perceptual acts involving the perception

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[35]It seems to me that a good part of our predilection to associate features of the normal perceptual causal chain--e.g. the use of the eyes, the functioning of the optic nerve, etc.--with acts of sense perception really only serves the purpose of ensuring that the perception, if it is to be a genuine sense perception, occurs by means of--that is, the phenomenological content of the act involves--the proper objects of the senses.

[36]The recipients of intellectual visions often claim that during such visions the object of the vision is spatially locatable and, hence, that their intellectual visions do provide reliable data about the sense-perceptible qualities of the objects of their visions.

of actually present sense-perceptible objects, and (c) by means of the proper objects of the senses. (I will not, though, attempt to settle the question of whether they are genuine acts of perceiving.) On either St. Teresa's or St. John's interpretation of imaginary visions, and for intellectual visions involving images, if the perceptual acts of these visions are not just ordinary perceptions, then these genuine acts of perception will count as acts of visionary perception just as actual perceptual acts count as acts of make-believe perception in the case of representational art. Now, it is in virtue of rules of make-believe that in viewing representational art literal acts of perceiving actual entities count as make-believe acts of seeing make-believe entities. All of the foregoing parallels between acts of perception in visions and in viewing representational art suggest that literal acts either of common sorts of perceiving or of what mystics designate as spiritual acts of perceiving of actual objects likewise count as acts of visionary perception of the entities in certain visions in virtue of the rules of operative game(s) of vision rules.

(vi) The functioning of such vision rules in certain visions is further supported by the fact that in perceived visions, when the mystic literally looks at the vision, he can identify visionary entities by the, frequently out of the ordinary, characteristics which they possess in the vision. This seems closely parallel to the viewer's ability to identify or distinguish the figures in a piece of representational art by their pictured, but not literalistically intended, characteristics. Thus, by some operative rules of make-believe, crowned figures of fatherly countenance and large physical

stature count as God-representations. Likewise, in the case of Bonaventura's seraphic vision in which the seraph's "likeness to the Crucified" reminds him of St. Francis's similar vision of Christ, perhaps there is a vision rule to the effect that what count as seraphic beings seen in visions in the form of crucified men are to be taken as Christ-visions.

(vii) Lastly, regarding the similarities between viewing representational pictorial art and perceptual acts involved in visions, mystics sometimes even describe their visions in the terminology of viewing "pictures." St. Teresa says in her Life that:

> All my gain has come through the revelations and the raptures, in which I am nothing myself, and do no more to effect them than the canvas does for the picture painted on it.[37]

and Julian of Norwich, in her description of her vision of the Passion, says that:

> At the same time as our blessed Lord and Saviour was dying on the cross there was, in my picture of it, a strong, dry, and piercingly cold wind.[38]

And St. John of the Cross says that imaginary visions are like

> a lightening flash, which, on a dark night, reveals things suddenly, and causes them to be clearly and distinctly seen . . . those things that the spirit has seen in that light remain impressed upon it in such a way that whensoever it observes them it sees them in itself as it saw them before; even as in a mirror the forms that are in it are seen whensoever a man looks in it.[39]

The operative function of a set of vision rules would complete the parallelisms between (especially religious) representational art and

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[37] St. Teresa, Life, Rel. 2.

[38] Julian of Norwich, Revelations, Ch. 16.

[39] St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Bk. II, Ch. 24:5.

visions, thereby helping explain and make sensible the mystics' own propensity to describe many of their visionary experiences as analogous to viewing pictures.

III

The supposition, thus independently supported, that vision rules are operative in certain visions is also supported by the fact that it provides an elucidative analysis of visions in helping explain the three puzzling aspects of visions raised at the outset of this chapter.

(1) Are the positions of the user of theological discourse and that of the mystic literalist ever conjointly compatible?

Theologians who have held that God and angels are necessarily incorporeal have not contradicted themselves by believing that religious art includes representational God-pictures and angel-pictures which depict apparently (literally) corporeal humanoids. By the rules of the game(s) of make-believe involved in representational religious art, certain corporeal-being-representations count as God-representations and angel-representations. Further, Articults only make-believedly "see God or angels," or see God touching Adam." Claims of visual perception of God-representations and angel-representations obviously do not commit the viewer to the actual existence of God or angels as corporeal or sense perceptible.

We can now see that for those visions in which vision rules are operative, the Mysticult's claim that he has, e.g., "seen God" or was "touched by God" is not, as it prima facie appears, linguistically odd within the language game(s) of theological discourse. Just

as the functioning rules of make-believe in representational pictorial art explain why it is not linguistically deviant for Articult users of orthodox theological discourse to say, on viewing the Sistine ceiling, that they "see God touching the hand of Adam," operative vision rules will explain why the Mysticult's claims are not linguistically odd. Articults only claim to make-believedly "see God touching the hand of Adam"; in visions in which vision rules are operative, Mysticults would only be claiming that it is visionally true that they, e.g., see or touch God. The Mysticult's claims that it is visionally true that he has sense perceptions of God and angels do not contradict the theological doctrines of the incorporeality and sense imperceptibility of these beings. They no more contradict these doctrines than do either Articults' claims to make-believedly "see God touching the hand of Adam" when viewing the Sistine ceiling contradict these theological doctrines or do claims to perceive a depiction of a magnetic field as a visual phenomenon contradict the scientific view of a magnetic field as an invisible force (though its effects are visible).

Part of the "flagging" function which non-mystics should regard such locutions as "Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling fresco shows ____" and, for certain visions, "In a vision I saw ____" as performing is the warning that from the reported perception of certain entities and from the facts expressed by such locutions, it cannot be inferred that those entities really exist or that those facts are literally true. (Although Articults and Mysticults might believe that they really exist and are literally true and though they might even really exist and might be literally true.)

(2) What structure of their perceptual acts could ever give percipients of visions a reasonable certitude of correctly recognizing the beings in their visions?

As he looks at the splotches of paint on canvas, an Articult who is reasonably informed about representational art can be reasonably sure of his identifications of the figures in a piece of representational painting. If we ask which figure is God in a representational religious painting, he might reply that God is the figure who is represented as being make-believedly crowned, larger than, and more fatherly than the beings represented by the angel-representations. It is in virtue of rules of make-believe that such identifications can be made and that it would not, e.g., be "right" for God to be represented as of smaller physical stature or younger or less intelligent appearing than angels.

Likewise, in visions in which vision rules are operative, vision rules will enable the percipient to be reasonably certain about the identity of the personages (and other entities) which he identifies in the vision. "How did you know that God was the central figure in your vision?" "Well, the other figures, which were winged--they were angels--were bowing down to the central figure and <u>He</u> was seated on a throne supported by several seraphim." In both the case of representational art and that of visions in which vision rules are operative, the structural feature of the percipient's conceptual experiences which makes this reasonable certitude of identification possible for the percipient is the set of operative rules--rules of make-believe or vision rules.

Of course, with respect to visions in which vision rules

function, the mystic will not have an epistemically privileged position regarding the identification of the personages, etc., in his visions. Anyone who is equally cognizant of the relevant vision rules is on an equal footing with the percipient in assessing the identity of the personages, etc., in the vision provided that he also knows all the relevant details of the entities literally perceived by the percipient. This is like the equal epistemic footing of two percipients in assessing the identity of figures, etc., in a painting which they are viewing, or about which they both know the physical details, when both percipients are equally informed about representational art.

The function of vision rules will thus explain, in those visions in which they are operative, why statements such as "I have just seen (or touched) God" are not linguistically deviant in ordinary religious discourse and how the percipients are able to have a reasonable certitude of correctly identifying the entities in their visions. But, even so, vision rules <u>are</u> likely to be less straightforward and simple than those make-believe rules involved in representational art. Beings like God, Christ, and angels are likely to be represented in a vision as having attributes which contradict those attributes commonly ascribed to these beings in ordinary (non-mystical) religious discourse. Frequently, such incorporeal entities are represented as corporeal and are visually, tactilely, etc., perceived.

Often this is also true of religious pictorial representations--e.g. the incorporeal being, God, is pictured as an apparently man-like corporeal being on the Sistine ceiling--but there are

devices in representational art which more readily mitigate such apparently contradictory attribution. In Tintoretto's The Last Supper, for instance, the incorporeal angels are represented as filmy, transparent beings. Although God or angels might appear as filmy, transparent beings in a vision, tactile, olfactory, etc., sensations of these beings in the vision would rob such filmy-being-representations of much of their force as incorporeal-being-representations. The effectiveness of incorporeal-being-representations is not vitiated in a parallel manner in representational art. The viewer does not make-believedly smell or taste God when he looks at the Sistine ceiling (though in a piece of representational religious art it might be make-believedly true that God has a fragrance).

The rules of make-believe operative in representational art could, of course, be exceedingly complex and any kind of picture could be an x-depicting picture for any kind of entity, x. In representational painting, however, only literal acts of visual perception count as make-believe perceptions, whereas in visions literal acts of perception involving all five senses can count as visionary acts of seeing, tasting, smelling, etc., God, or Christ, or an angel. Therefore, vision rules parallelling the rules of make-believe operative in representational art would have to be more complex than those rules of make-believe to the extent that it is visionally true that the participant can not only see the incorporeal, perhaps timeless, being, God, but can also touch, taste, smell, and hear such a being.

(3) Why do mystics tend to perceive in their visions entities which accord with their expectations?

Two percipients who are familiar with the representational art

of a certain period will see roughly the same things if they are shown the same painting of that period which neither has seen before. They are participants in the same game(s) of make-believe and they are very likely to offer identical identifications of the figures in the painting. Imagine that they are used to rules of make-believe such that larger, more fatherly figures in relation to the other figures in a religious painting count as God-representations. Now they are shown a piece of religious representational painting where the operative rule is that God is represented as younger than and smaller than angels (perhaps to signify the eternal youthfulness of His thoughts and His reticence to overawe His creatures). The figure represented in this way will at first not be recognized as God.

In a like manner, for those visions in which vision rules are operative, their functioning would account for the fact that percipients of the same vision features, features often unencountered in ordinary perception, perceive, for the most part, the same entities just as viewers of, e.g., the Sistine ceiling who are participating in the same game of make-believe uniformly see God, and not a queer rotund man, touching the hand of Adam. And, where the same set of paint splotches may convey to viewers using different rules of make-believe two different, even opposing, sets of make-believe truths, so participants in two different games of vision rules could perceive different and even opposing visionary truths when perceiving the same or exactly similar perceived visions. It certainly seems puzzling that mystics tend to perceive in their visions entities which they had a prior expectation of perceiving. But at least in the case of visions involving vision rules, this problematic feature of visions

is no more unusual than, and is even as expectable as, the fact that what make-believe truths the viewers of representational art perceive is largely determined by their prior expectations. In both instances, the percipients' prior expectations about what certain configurations might make-believedly or visionally count as are determined by the rules of the particular game of, respectively, make-believe or vision rules in which they are already participants.

IV

In spite of the foregoing considerations which suggest that visions often depict visionary truths in virtue of a game(s) of vision rules in which the perceiver is a knowing participant, those rules, unlike the make-believe rules always operative in representational art, cannot be operative in all visions. None of the make-believe truths of representational art can be perceived by the viewer apart from the (unconscious) use of the appropriate rules of make-believe. In many cases, Mysticults may come to know visionary truths in virtue of vision rules, but there are two sorts of visions in which it is clear that the truths which are perceived in visions could not be known in virtue of vision rules and in which the functioning of vision rules will not help explain the three puzzling aspects of visions with which this chapter is concerned. These two types of instances in which vision rules are not operative in visions can best be delineated by examining the respects in which visions are <u>unlike</u> <u>x</u>-depictions in pictorial representations.

(i) Some <u>x</u>-visions, let us take God-visions, can be known by the perceiver to be God-visions without the perceiver's inferring from

any of the features of his vision that he is perceiving God-visions. Further, the percipient can know that the vision is a God-vision apart from a non-inferential recognition that a being in his vision is God. In certain circumstances, a pictorial God-representation can be perceived as such even though the perceiver does not infer this from the relevant features of the representation (and from the operative rules of make-believe). The latter might be true because, e.g., the painter might tell the viewer that his painting is a God-representation or it might be so labelled.[40] In contrast, Mysticults do not (generally) have visions in which each entity is labelled--or in which a narrator goes from entity to entity, ostensibly naming each one.[41] How, apart from any labelling or benefit of a narrator, could the person who knowingly has a God-vision without non-inferentially recognizing or inferring that a being in his vision is God know that it is a God-vision?

To answer this question it is helpful to notice that it is not a queer feature only true of some visions that a percipient can know that an x-representation is an x-representation without non-inferentially recognizing or inferring this and apart from any labelling, narration, etc. This same phenomenon occurs in dreams.[42]

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[40] Inferring from the label that the painting is a God-representation is not a case of inferring this from the relevant features of the representation because the label is not part of the representation.

[41] Though, for example, Daniel 8:15-17 relates a vision in which "I [Daniel] sought to understand it; and behold there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice . . . 'Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.' So he [i.e. Gabriel] came near where I stood . . ." and in Luke 1 a vision is described during which an angel appears to Zechariah and identifies himself as Gabriel.

[42] I am discussing ordinary dreams here. Some dreams are clas-

Consider the following: dream A. Ralph has a dream about John Muir. In Ralph's dream, John Muir is a young girl who travels around the Alps starting forest fires. After he reports his dream, Ralph denies, when asked, that he knows with certainty who John Muir was. (Perhaps he had heard the name once and merely knew that it was someone with an interest in trees who travelled extensively.) This is a perfectly possible dream experience.

A person cannot have a dream about a specific object, X, in which it is given as being about X, unless he has some minimal belief (perhaps mostly false) about the identity of X. However, in a dream like A it is simply part of the phenomenological content of the dream that the person dreamed about is John Muir even though the dreamer does not in fact know enough about Muir that if he actually met Muir he could recognize him inferentially or recognize him in virtue of features which act as perceptual "cues." Ralph non-inferentially perceives (and does not recognize) Muir in his dream and we commonly non-inferentially recognize our best friends, but in the case of the dream none of John-Muir-the-dream-figure's features act as perceptual "cues" for the perception of this figure as Muir, whereas when we non-inferentially recognize our friends, their facial features, posture, etc. act as perceptual "cues" for our recognition.[43] It would be

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sified by the mystical writers as visions. St. Thomas says that if a percipient has an imaginary vision while he is asleep, it is called a dream. (See Summa Theologica, Pt. II, II, Q. 174, Art. 3 and Pt. I, Q. 111, Art. 3.) There is no need to assess here the attempted distinction between ordinary dreams and dreams which are a species of vision.

The basic idea that visions and dreams have some features in common was first suggested to me by Nelson Pike.

[43] In our immediate experience, non-inferential recognition of

inappropriate to protest that Ralph's dream could not have been about John Muir since Muir was a male conservationist and not a female pyromaniac. Ralph would not say, upon learning who John Muir was, "Oh, my dream must have been about someone else."

In a similar manner, the identity of objects in a vision may be known non-inferentially and may simply be a part of the phenomenological content of the vision. St. Teresa reports this exchange with her confessor about one of her visions:

> If you see nothing, he asked her, 'how do you know it is our Lord?' Then he told her to tell him what His face was like. She replied that she did not know, that she had seen no face . . . what she did know was that it was He who was speaking to her . . .[44]

It would be wrong for Teresa's confessor to insist that she could not know that Christ was the object of her vision if she did not perceive any of His features by which to identify Him. In a related manner, if St. Francis during his seraphic vision non-inferentially perceived the vision as a Christ-vision (and did not non-inferentially recognize Christ by perceptual "cues" in the vision), it would be inappropriate to claim that it could not have been a Christ-vision since Christ never had and never will have the form of a seraph. In both x-dreams and certain x-visions, x can be depicted as having properties which are the converse or contradictory of properties known by the perceiver to be possessed by the actual x. Thus, God might appear in a vision to Thomas Aquinas as a corporeal entity, and our

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entities and habitual but unnoticed inferential recognition of entities may be indistinguishable. I take it, though, that if we carefully reflect on our recognition of objects we can distinguish these two sorts of recognition since only in the latter sort of recognition do we become aware of inferences involved in our recognition.

[44] St. Teresa, Interior Castle, Sixth Mansions, Ch. 8.

hypothetical dreamer, Ralph, may have dream A even though he is a noted authority on American naturalists.

A dream is a type of experience, not an external state of affairs which one perceives. Consonant with this, it would only be in those visions where the vision is identical with the experience, i.e. received visions, that it will always be simply part of the phenomenological content of the vision that during the vision the percipient visionally either just perceives or infers the identity of entities in the vision. On the other hand, it is only during perceived visions--i.e. instances where the vision is identical with an external state of affairs--that the percipient can literally infer the identity of visionary entities while literally looking at the vision.

During some perceived visions, misidentifications of the entities in the vision can occur, and this indicates that vision rules are operative during those visions since in ordinary perception misidentifications are likely to occur when inferences are made by explicitly, or implicitly, using rules. In contrast, during a dream misidentifications of dream entities cannot occur (although one may dream--that is, in one's dream it may be true--that one misidentifies an object). While dreaming we do not use rules to identify the objects and their qualities in our dreams. One might have a dream in which one could tell that one was, e.g., talking to Socrates because one dreams that one sees the squatness of the stature, the bandy legs, and the snub nose, but one cannot while dreaming non-dreamingly see, on the basis of the features of the personage one is talking to in the dream, that one is dreaming about Socrates. (Excepting, of

course, a dream within a dream where in the first dream one is dreaming that one is awake and attentive to the features of the second dream.)

Likewise, during received visions, no literal inferences would be made from the features of entities to the identity of those entities, and therefore in received visions there can be no misidentification of visionary entities.[45] Since there can, thus, be no mistaken inferences about the identity of entities in a received vision, there can be no inferences. Where no inferences are made, no rules are used; where no inferences can be made, no rules can be operative. Unlike those perceived visions in which vision rules are operative, in both dreams and visions, rules will not be operative such that literal acts of perception count as other sorts of acts of perception.

Hence the function of vision rules will not explain how mystics could have a reasonable certitude of correctly identifying the entities in received visions or why in these visions they perceive entities which accord with their expectations. Yet the comparison of identifications of entities in dreams and received visions indicates an answer for received visions to the former puzzling feature of visions. If an entity is identified in a received vision, the identity of that entity is simply part of the phenomenological content of the vision. The person in Ralph's dream is John Muir irregardless of

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[45] On the other hand, even though during received visions the recipient cannot during the vision misidentify the entities in the vision, the recipient could erroneously believe after the vision that he was perceiving rather than having a vision, and then using inferential grounds misidentify entities in the vision.

whether or not the dream figure possesses the same characteristics commensurate with those possessed by the real John Muir; just so, if a personage is given in a received vision, e.g. as God, then the figure in the vision is God irregardless of the characteristics He is given as possessing. This is not to say anything about the real identity of any real personages whose words, actions, etc., are represented in a received vision. God may communicate something to a mystic through a received vision, but if the personage in the vision is given as being Jones, then in the vision it is Jones who speaks.

Two qualifications should be noted, though, to the notion that the identity of a figure in a dream or received vision is determined by the phenomenological content of the dream and not by criteria of identity applied to the features of the dream after its completion. (1) If the features of a figure but not its identity are given in the content of a dream or a received vision, it is appropriate to identify the figure in the dream or vision from the given features after the dream or vision is over. (2) Both the features and identity of a dream or received vision figure, say Gabriel, might be given in a dream yet if after the completion of the dream it is determined that the features of the dream figure are exactly similar to Michael's actual features, it would be proper to identify the dream figure as Gabriel, but Gabriel in the role of, or seen as, or as being, Michael.

(ii) Another feature which dreams and received visions have in common and which is not a feature of the perception of representational art is that an entity, X, is not necessarily represented in such experiences as anything except as X.

Imagine the following dream: B. Ralph has a dream in which he shakes hands with Beethoven, although in the dream he has no sensory perceptions of Beethoven--in particular he does not see Beethoven and he does not feel his hand when he shakes it--even though he has visual, tactile, etc. sensations of the room in which he meets Beethoven. Angela of Foligno relates a vision, which is similar to dream B, in which she sees only what is on a table but not the table itself, though she knows that the table is there:

> [I was] placed at a table which had neither beginning nor end. I was not placed there to behold the table, but that which was upon it . . . I can say nothing more concerning this vision, save that the one word 'table' remained in my memory.[46]

Why does Angela only see what is on the table but not the table itself? I take it that most probably it was simply part of the phenomenological content of her vision that these things were on the table--i.e. that the table was present--even though the table was not one of the perceptible entities in the vision.

As in a dream, one might have a received vision of God and nine angels in which only the nine angels are visually, tactilely, etc., perceived. Of course, God is represented as present in such a vision and not simply as God, but obviously in representational art God, or any other being, would have to be represented as something more than merely as being (make-believedly) present. In received visions, there are no perceived characteristics of the entity in question by which, through the use of the rules of a game(s) of vision rules, that entity is identifiable.

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[46]Angela of Foligno, Consolation, pp. 173-174.

An apparent exception should be noted to the general principle that in representional art objects must be represented, given the way rules of make-believe operate, as more than merely (make-believedly) present. Imagine a painting titled The Twelve Disciples See the Holy Spirit Descend in which twelve figures are staring and pointing at a point which appears to be above the upper edge of the painting. Here it is make-believedly true that the Holy Spirit is simply present. Yet the Holy Spirit is not make-believedly present in the painting, for while it is make-believedly true that the Holy Spirit is simply present, the Holy Spirit is not represented in the painting as being make-believedly present. Visionary entities cannot in the same way be "outside" a vision (whether a received or a perceived vision) if it is a visionary truth that the entity is present. Crudely put, visions, unlike paintings, have no edges: the limits of visionary space are only set by the visionary location of those entities of which it is visionally true that they are present. Thus in a received vision in which the percipient sees the apostles watching the Holy Spirit descend but does not see the Holy Spirit itself, since it is given as part of the phenomenological content of the vision that it is visionally true that in the vision the apostles see the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is present in the vision even though it is not within the (visionally existent) visual field of the visionary. In contrast, in our hypothetical painting the Holy Spirit is not make-believedly present in the painting though it is make-believedly true that it is present to the apostles.

The visionary truth that the Holy Spirit is descending in the presence of the apostles parallels the make-believe truth of a repre-

sentational painting of the face of a man that there is a back to his head. Here the back of the man's head, as well as his face, is part of the make-believe world which corresponds to the literal contents of the painting, just as the Holy Spirit and the apostles are part of the visionary world of the hypothetical painting The Twelve Apostles See the Holy Spirit Descend. However, the title of the painting, like the physical painting itself, is not part of the make-believe world and the presence of the Holy Spirit is not directly part of the content of the painting and is only inferrable from the title as a fact about the make-believe world.

(iii) Finally, besides received visions, a second grouping of visions will not involve vision rules. Perceived visions can be divided into those perceived visions in which vision rules are operative and those in which they are not operative. In perceived visions which merely involve ordinary sense perceptions, entities in the vision may be non-inferentially recognized and, hence, recognized apart from the use of vision rules. There also might well be visions in which some entities are non-inferentially recognized but which additionally involve the inferential recognition by means of vision rules of some of the entities in the vision. In those perceived visions in which vision rules are not at all operative, the function of such rules will not help explain the three puzzling features of visions with which we are concerned in this chapter.

The functions of vision rules will explain for certain perceived visions (1) why it is not linguistically odd within ordinary western religious discourse for the mystic to say "I have just seen

(or touched) God (or an angel), (2) what structure of their perceptual experience would enable mystics to be reasonably certain that they correctly identify the beings in those visions, and (3) why mystics tend to perceive entities which accord with their expectations. In received visions and perceived visions involving only ordinary sense perceptions, rules cannot be operative and these three puzzling features of visions will not be explained in terms of the functioning of vision rules (though in received visions there is another answer to (2): it is simply part of the phenomenological content of the vision that an entity has the identity which it is given as having in the vision). Concentrating on perceived visions involving ordinary sense perceptions, these three puzzling features of visions will be elucidated in the next three chapters through an analysis of the function of conceptual schemas in perception and of the difference between the conceptual schema(s) of users of ordinary theological discourse and the conceptual schema(s) of mystic literalists.

FOUR

CONCEPTUAL SCHEMAS AND THE RADICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF PERCEPTION

In the last chapter, three troublesome features of visions were clarified for certain perceived visions in terms of operative vision rules. Those visions were visions in which the claim to perceive objects or their properties did not entail a commitment on the part of the percipient to the existential status of those objects or their properties. Yet some percipients of visions claim to have literal sense perceptions during their visions of God or angels themselves. Here, to take one of the problematic features of visions discussed in the last chapter, it does seem linguistically deviant for the participant to say that he has, granted during a vision, literally seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled God or an angel. Such claims seem linguistically deviant when, at the same time, the mystic claims or would claim that he is referring to the same beings denoted by the locutions "God" or "angel" in non-mystical religious discourse. In assessing this, and other problems concerning visions, I will for the remainder of this essay concentrate on perceived visions not involving vision rules.

In order to begin to provide a basis from which (a) ultimately to resolve this (apparent) contradiction which arises between

the mystic literalist and the ordinary theological language games regarding the sense perceptibility of God and angels and (b) to clarify several aspects of the claim that certain perceived features of visions are ineffable, it will be necessary in this chapter to explain the role of conceptual schemas in perception.

Further regarding perceived visions in which vision rules are not operative, there is the question of why mystics tend to perceive entities which accord with their expectations and, especially given that mystics do tend to perceive only entities which accord with their expectations, the question, as pointed out in Chapter Two, of what structural features of his perceptions could give the mystic any reasonable certitude of correctly identifying the entities in the vision. These two questions cannot begin to be answered until, as will be done through the following analysis of the role of conceptual schemas in perception, the structural form of the content of our perceptual acts and the difference between an interpretation of the phenomenology of perceptual acts and the uninterpreted contents of perceptual acts are clarified.

I

The notion of a "conceptual schema" which I will be using here derives from the Kantian view that the phenomenological content of our perceptual experience consists in the "booming, buzzing confusion" of the "output" of our physiological sense-reception processes qua ordered or categorized by the mind. I will call this ordering or categorization of the "output" of the physiological sense-reception processes "conceptualization," the resultant phenomenological content

of perceptual experience being "conceptualized."

A percipient's "conceptual schema" is the a priori conceptual structure of this element of ordering which the mind contributes or brings to experience--primarily concepts, categories, their logical interrelationships, and the laws of logic. For any percipient, P, P's conceptual schema[1] is "a priori" in the sense that for any particular conceptualized momentary experience, E, of P's, occurring at time T, E does not at T alter or otherwise affect the ordering which P's conceptual schema contributes to E at T. A percipient's beliefs, but not every belief of his, are constitutive elements of the conceptual structure of his conceptual schema (e.g. a belief only held momentarily at time T may not become part of a percipient's conceptual schema because it never even in principle becomes an a priori element of his mind's ordering of experience at moments temporally posterior to T). Thus, for example, the rules of make-believe and the parallel vision rules discussed in Chapter Three are constitutive elements of

[1] A word about my choice of the locution "conceptual schema." I prefer this term to such phrases as "conceptual framework" and "conceptual scheme" (1) to avoid any confusion with the usages of those latter two locutions in the recent philosophic literature, (2) because "conceptual framework" suggests, to my mind, only the broadest and most fundamental outlines of the conceptual structure of the element of ordering which the mind brings to experience and I will usually intend "conceptual schema" to denote the whole of that conceptual structure, and (3) both "conceptual scheme" and "conceptual framework" suggest a conceptual structure which the percipient could (or does) select and, by decision, commences to use. (In point of fact, Carnap talks about "the acceptance of a [conceptual] framework of new entities" in "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology," in Semantics and the Philosophy of Language, ed. L. Linsky [Urbana, Ill., 1952], and Quine, in "On What There Is," in Quine, From a Logical Point of View [New York, 1963], talks about "constructing" and "fixing upon" one's conceptual scheme.) While I think that one can at any one time effectively choose portions of one's conceptual schema, I do not feel that one can choose in toto the conceptual structure which one's mind brings to experience.

the conceptual schemas of participants in the corresponding games of make-believe or of vision rules.

A conceptual schema does not include whatever non-cognitive elements the mind brings to experience. Thus, for example, emotive dispositions or a non-cognitive aesthetic sense are not elements of a person's conceptual schema, and if an extreme non-cognitivist meta-ethics is correct--say of the sort held by A. J. Ayer--then whatever is held on that theory to be the referent of non-cognitive ethical terms will not be elements in one's conceptual schema.[2]

It seems to me reasonably clear that our conceptual schemas are not innate though I think that humans possess innate dispositions to acquire, through efficacious experiences, specific conceptual structures in their conceptual schemas. Conceptual schemas are developed through experience by means of posterior reflection, in the light of pragmatic considerations, on past experiences, as well as by a natural inclination to unreflectively adopt what, as William James would have said, "works."

The locution "conceptual schema" will be used to refer both to the totality of the a priori conceptual structure which a mind brings to experience as well as to those subsets of a percipient's total conceptual schema which contain the complete conceptual structure and logic of specific aspects of the logic of the mind's ordering of experience--e.g. one's conceptual schema of visual perception, of tactile sensations, of dreams, etc. The logic of many or every

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[2]On the other hand, if either a definist or intuitionist meta-ethical theory is correct, then ethical concepts will be part of one's conceptual schema.

such complete conceptual schema subset will, if the percipient uses language games, be reflected in the logic and rules of a corresponding language game.[3] One's language game of visual perception, for instance, has the same conceptual structure as one's conceptual schema of visual perception (though as I will indicate, such language games seldom have the complete conceptual structure of the correspondent conceptual schema subset).

Rudolf Carnap, in "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology," suggests that "to accept the thing world [as an example of accepting a conceptual framework] means nothing more than to accept a certain form of language, in other words, to accept rules for forming statements and for testing, accepting, or rejecting them."[4] Concepts are analyzable in terms of rules; the possession of a concept is analyzable in terms of dispositions to act, the rules comprising the analysans of the concept setting the boundary conditions of those act-dispositions. To accept, in the sense of to acquire, a conceptual schema subset might involve accepting the rules of the appropriate language game, but accepting a conceptual schema subset is not the same as accepting the use of the appropriate language game(s) since conceptual schema subsets, and conceptual schemas, are not identical with (sets of) language games. (Though Carnap may be right in saying

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[3] No doubt one can decide to adopt at least the basic conceptual structure of a conceptual schema subset (by choosing to adopt the fundamental rules of the corresponding language game). My use of "conceptual schema subset" and "language game of $\emptyset$" roughly parallels more recent philosophers', like Carnap's and Quine's, notions of "conceptual schemes (or frameworks)" which the percipient can adopt by choice.

[4] Rudolf Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology," in Semantics and the Philosophy of Language, ed. L. Linsky, p. 211.

that for us the act of beginning to acquire a particular conceptual schema subset is initially simply the act of accepting the rules of a particular language game.) Two considerations argue for this distinction.

A percipient's ability to discriminate some portion, as a unified entity, of his sensory field[5] from the remainder of that sensory field--i.e. from the environment of that unified entity--marks a mind-imposed ordering of the "booming, buzzing confusion." Division, distinction, and entity identity are constructs which the mind imposes on the "output" of the physiological sense-reception processes. It seems to me that the behavior of the higher forms of non-human animal life clearly indicates that, if only in a rudimentary fashion, they discriminate and distinguish portions of their sensory fields. This distinguishing and discriminating of physical objects and events, as unrefined as it may be, is a conceptualizing of experience. For, in view of this distinguishing and discriminating, I can see no plausible way, except at a great cost of artificiality, of ascribing the possession of concepts to humans while denying that other higher animals possess concepts. Now, pigs and porpoises are (essentially) non-verbal and follow the rules of no language games. Were they verbal, we can only suppose that they would exhibit a participation in language games as lacking (or non-lacking) in complexity as their conceptual schemas. Still, what I take to be

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[5]By "sensory field" here I do not mean the phenomenological field--for that is the product of the mind's ordering--but the "field of view" of the senses: those physical objects and events which a percipient is at a given moment causally able to detect by means of his senses.

their conceptualizing of experience, which by definition entails their possession of conceptual schemas, is distinct from the use of language games and their rules. Conceptual schemas and language games cannot therefore be identical.

Secondly, I think that a consideration of very young children shows that discrimination and ability to distinguish--i.e. conceptualization--is pre-verbal, even pre-reflective, and clearly distinct from a participation in language games of perception. Further, we have experiences in which we distinguish and conceptualize before we can verbalize those experiences and, as our adult experiences testify, language usage is inadequate to the richness and diversity of our experience. Language is for the most part a social achievement, dependent on the acceptance of conventions, and is developed to capture the diversity of <u>already conceptualized</u> experiences. Experience is not delimited by the extent of the percipient's language. Experience does not wait for language; language acquisition, though, usually waits for experience. Conceptual schemas and language games are not identical.

Since a conceptual schema is by definition the element of conceptualizing which a mind brings to experience, the pervasive conceptualization of experience which I will extensively consider entails our possession of conceptual schemas. There is, however, another, simpler consideration which induces us to recognize the fact that conceptual schemas play a role in our perceptual experience. What we can experience cannot be limited solely by what in fact exists to be experienced; otherwise we could only discover the limits of experience through experience. For, possible experience is deli-

mited by the logically possible as much as by the actually existent. Whether chimeras exist to be literally perceived obviously depends in part on whether their existence is logically possible. As I will argue in the next chapter, and as is, I think, in effect implied by those who argue that the supposed distinction between analytic and synthetic truths is illusory and untenable, the limits of logical possibility are determined by the conceptual structure of one's conceptual schema. Hence, possible experience is delimited by the conceptual structure of a percipient's conceptual schema and being a percipient entails possessing a conceptual schema.

II

In order to analyze the structural form which the mind's conceptualization of experience gives to individual acts of perception, it will be useful to distinguish two types of perceptual consciousness: reflective and unreflective consciousness.[6]

In unreflective consciousness the percipient is only aware of the immediate object of perception: a chair, a conifer, a marmot, a maroon patch. Walk down the street in a distracted mood: automobiles and people pass and a variegated multitude of detail is unreflectively experienced. This detail is unreflectively experienced, yet experienced, because if asked "Did you see a man wearing a floppy yellow fedora pass by at the last corner?" you might respond, "Yes, now that I think about it I did, although at the time I didn't especially notice that man."

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[6] I am here using Sartre's terminology in The Transcendence of the Ego.

It is quite a different thing to be consciously aware, reflecting about, one's perceptual experiences. In reflective consciousness the percipient reflects on an act of unreflective consciousness: e.g. one becomes aware that I am perceiving a chair, etc. For P to perceive x at t during an act of unreflective consciousness is for P to form a disposition at t to believe on reflection that P is, or was, perceiving what x looked like to P at t.

It is a mistake, I think, to suppose that our perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness have as an object some "thing" or event other than the physical object or event ostensibly being perceived which serves as an intermediary between our unreflective perceptual acts and perceived physical objects and events. There are no "raw" or "pure" "sense data," "sense qualities," "appearings," etc. (what I take to be a myth here has had many guises) independent of the mind's activity which is the object of or content of those acts of awareness which we call sense perceptions. Chairs and marmots and maroon patches are perceived in acts of unreflective consciousness by means of "presentations"--in the broad sense of that "by which we perceive" the objects of perception--but there are no perceptions of those presentations: our unreflective perceptual acts are those presentations. Perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness are contentless; they are themselves the contents of ordinary, unreflective perceptual experience; they are both the awareness and the "presentations" of which we are aware in unreflective perception.

In acts of reflective consciousness there are two types of experiential content: the content of the unreflective act of perception and the content, which includes the unreflective act, of the

reflective act. In acts of unreflective consciousness, on the other hand, there is only one type of content to experience. In perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness, even when these are the objects of acts of reflective consciousness, there is only an awareness of (what seem to be) facts about states of affairs of the percipient's body and environment. Considerations of parsimony argue that this is all that constitutes perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness[7] and that there are no "sense data," "appearings," etc., which are the intermediate objects of these awarenesses. The postulation of such entities is the postulation of an unnecessary category of ontology. Not only is it the case that phenomenologically we are unaware of the existence of members of this category--I certainly don't seem to perceive sense data when I perceive chairs--but there is a much simpler explanation of what is the content of our perceptual acts.

There is a single entity--a propositional episode--which serves the dual functions bifurcated by the notion that there are object or event "presentations" of which our perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness are awarenesses. Perceptual acts of unreflective (and reflective) consciousness are episodic occurrences of an awareness of propositions about states of affairs of the percipient's body and environment (though only in perceptual acts of reflective consciousness does this awareness include the additional awareness that there is an awareness about the external world). Each perceptual act of unreflective consciousness is a set of propositional epi-

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[7] D. M. Armstrong makes a similar point by defining perception as the acquisition of beliefs (an analysis we will need to return to in a moment).

sodes. As such they possess two primary aspects--viz. the content of the propositional episode, i.e. the "data" of experience, and the form in which that data is experienced, a propositional form.

A second consideration argues more specifically against the notion that a hypothesized content of or object of our unreflective perceptual acts is independent of the mind's activity. It is plausible to suggest that early in a percipient's perceptual career initial perceptions of basic sense qualities give rise to changes in the percipient's conceptual structure. This is, I take it, how the beginnings of the complex conceptual interrelationships of our conceptual schemas are initially acquired and changed in response to pragmatic considerations and an unreflective feel for "what works." However, after this earliest stage in our perceptual lives, the immediate objects of perceptions are both sense qualities--maroon patches, musical notes, sour tastes--and complex unified objects--chairs, conifers, and marmots.

Given that physical objects are, along with sense qualities, immediate objects of experience, the suggestion that there is a "pure" object or event "presentation" of which acts of unreflective consciousness are awarenesses looks even more dubious. As long as the contents of perception are thought to be always completely and fundamentally reduceable to (sets of) data about sense qualities, the notion that sense qualities "produce" in some sense or other "sense data" or "appearings" which are free of the mind's construction and which we are in turn aware of during acts of unreflective consciousness is attractive. That there are "pure" chair or best friend or The Death of Socrates "sense data" or "appearings," independent of

the mind's activity, is not nearly so plausible; perceptions of chairs and particular paintings are more obviously conceptualizations than red patches. Yet immediate non-inferential perceptual recognitions are often recognitions of chairs or particular friends or particular paintings, and these immediate non-inferential perceptual recognitions of chairs, etc., are not, phenomenologically, composites of and hence not reduceable to perceptions of sense qualities. Applying these considerations about perceptions of complex physical objects, which clearly seem to involve conceptualization, parsimoniously to all our perceptions, it will not be, then, that there are "pure" presentations, independent of the mind's conceptualizing, which form the content of our unreflective perceptual acts.

III

In addition to the position that there is no "raw" or "pure" "presentation," independent of the mind's activity, which is the content of unreflective acts of perceptual awareness, there is a second aspect of the logic of perception which has already been touched on and which will operate importantly in this essay. All perceptual experiences are conceptualized, or ordered, by the mind: the phenomenological content of perceptual experience is radically conceptualized.[8] That is, a percipient's conceptual schema orders all of his perceptual experiences. Genuine perception minimally involves the differentiation of the perceived entity from its environmental con-

[8] G. N. A. Vesey has made a similar point, though a more restricted one limited to visual perception: "All seeing is seeing as" ("Seeing and Seeing As" in Perceiving, Sensing and Knowing, ed. Robert Swartz [New York, 1965], pp. 72-73).

text in the sensory field, even if this act of distinguishing amounts to nothing more than the conceptualization of the entity, whether object or event, as a unified entity (a "something") in (i.e. in contrast to) the world. For instance, a percipient can correctly be said to see only if what he sees looks like something. All perceiving is perceiving as.[9]

From the fact that all perceiving is perceiving as, it follows that all perception is true or false, or partially true and partially false. Sense perceptions are true when what the percipient would, during a concurrent act of reflective consciousness, take the perceived state of affairs of a perceptual act of unreflective consciousness to be is what the state of affairs is. Otherwise the perception is, at least partially, false. (I take it that during a concurrent act of reflective consciousness, we cannot be mistaken about the content of the act of unreflective consciousness which is its object. We cannot unreflectively see X as ϕ and, concurrently, reflecting on that unreflective act see X as not-ϕ.) A perception would be partially true and partially false if during the perceptual act one, e.g., took X to be ϕ and ψ when X is in fact ϕ and not-ψ. And notice that, e.g., a partially submerged stick could either be seen as bent (a false perception), even if one knows that the stick is straight but does not have that knowledge vividly in mind, or as a

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[9]And of course given that to say that a percipient "sees," "hears," etc., is to say that he "sees (etc.) something as x," it follows from this radical conceptualization of all the phenomenological content of unreflective perceptual acts, and from the definition of a conceptual schema as the cognitive element of ordering which the mind brings to experience, that all sensory percipients have conceptual schemas.

straight stick that looks as if it were bent (a true perception).

The reason perceptions are true or false is that a perceptual act, either of unreflective consciousness simpliciter or of unreflective consciousness as the object of an act of reflective consciousness, is a set of propositional episodes--i.e. is a (set of) episodic states of consciousness of propositions (about the state of our bodies or environment). However, unreflective perceptual acts, though true or false, are neither beliefs nor judgments.

D. M. Armstrong, in A Materialist Theory of the Mind, defines perception as the acquisition of beliefs, beliefs about the current[10] state of the organism's body and environment.[11] I think Armstrong has mistakenly identified the common belief aspect rather than the propositional aspect of perceptual acts as definitive of perceptual acts.

The occurrent propositional episodes (about the state of the organism's body and environment) which, on the view offered here, are identical with perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness, are I take it most often believed true and they are necessarily more often than not correctly believed to be true. The reason that these propositional episodes are more often than not correctly believed to be true has already been noted[12] in terms of the conceptual entailment

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[10] I do not stipulate that the propositions which we are episodically aware of in perceptual experience are propositions about current states of the percipient's body and environment because, e.g., a sophisticated astronomer observing the stars might only acquire beliefs about their relative positions a long time ago.

[11] D. M. Armstrong, A Materialist Theory of the Mind (New York, 1968), p. 209.

[12] P. 110.

between "genuine perception" and a relatively frequent success in gathering correct information about one's environment by means of acts of perception. Thus, Armstrong is correct to point out the conceptual entailment between perceptual acts and belief states, since it is part of what we mean by genuine perception that we tend (uncritically) to believe what we perceive. But there are instances of genuine perception apart from belief and it seems to me that this makes it evident that perceptual acts are not definitively occurrent acquisitions of beliefs.

Armstrong recognizes[13] two instances of perception without belief. He treats them as peripheral cases, possibly involving an "inclination to belief" and deriving their character as genuine perceptual acts from more central cases of perception with belief: (1) cases in which one has perceptions which "do not correspond to physical reality"--e.g. mirror images--yet fails to be deceived by them and hence fails to acquire false beliefs and (2) cases in which beliefs are not acquired because the percipient already possesses the true (or false) beliefs which would otherwise have been acquired or because the perception was "weak" and ("incredibly," says Armstrong) no belief is acquired. He calls the last "idle" perceptions.

First, the identification of propositional episodes, whose referents are states of affairs of the percipient's body and environment, and perceptual acts engenders none of the awkwardness which arises from Armstrong's attempt to group perceptual acts into central versus peripheral cases of perception.

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[13]Armstrong, A Materialist Theory of the Mind, p. 216 f.

Second, each specific type of perception without belief tells against Armstrong's position. For the percipient acquainted with the effects of mirrors and therefore not misled by mirror images, perceiving physical objects by means of perceiving mirror images and perceiving physical objects under ordinary circumstances--including, e.g., through a wire mesh screen, through the fog, in unusually bright sunlight--are types of perceptions whose differences are inconsequential and discoutable insofar as both count equally as cases of genuine perception. The element of belief in the latter and not in the former cannot mark the difference between genuine and only parasitic cases of perception. In both, though, one definitive aspect making the act a perceptual act is the propositional episode, whose referent is a state of affairs of the percipient's body or environment, which in the mirror image case simply does not become the subject of belief.

Again, each successive sense perception of the same entity is a genuine sense perception of that entity even if after the initial perceptual act no further beliefs are acquired (and there is no further inclination to acquire beliefs) about the entity in question. In each succeeding perceptual act, though, there is a set of propositional episodes similar to those occurring during the first perception of the entity and which are the potential subjects of belief about the object. Beliefs are such that a single cognizer cannot acquire a belief which he already possesses. Yet percipients can have exactly similar perceptions numerous times and they can, on numerous occasions, become (maybe unreflectively) conscious of exactly similar propositional episodes. Finally, the case of "idle" perceptions obviously mitigates against taking the aquisition of beliefs as a

definitive characteristic of perception.

If we grant that there are perceptions so "weak" that no belief is acquired ("idle" perceptions for Armstrong), then it is also clear that perceptions, as well as not being acquisitions of belief, cannot be judgments either. To judge that p is the case is to believe that p is the case, and these "weak" perceptions could not involve judgments. There are two stronger considerations, though, which preclude the possibility that perceptions are judgments. First, judgments are mental acts of which we are consciously aware and the perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness often are not mental acts of which we are consciously aware. Perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness, then, could not be judgments. (Though propositional episodes which are perceptual acts are not, insofar as they are simply occurrent during states of unreflective consciousness, the subjects of acts of conscious awareness, they are of course potentially the subjects of acts of conscious awareness, viz. as the subjects either of acts of concurrent reflective consciousness or of later acts of remembering.) Second, judgments are inherently interpretive but since interpretation occurs only during reflective consciousness, judgments cannot occur as acts of unreflective consciousness and, hence, cannot be identical with perceptual acts since they can occur as acts of unreflective consciousness apart from states of reflective consciousness.

Therefore, while neither beliefs nor judgments, yet having a propositional form, the data of instances of sensory experience--i.e. the data of the phenomenological content of particular perceptual

acts--are a set of "facts,"[14] "facts" about the percipient's body and environment which are expressed by those mental occurrences which are the propositional episodes of perception. These "facts" can, upon reflection or later recall, either become the referents of the beliefs which are acquired during ordinary reflective perception or become the content which is recalled when one remembers "the look," or "the feel," or "the sound," etc., of past perceptual experiences.[15]

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[14] I use scare quotes here because these apparent facts are often false.

[15] Numerous troublesome aspects of sense-datum theories have been pointed out by other philosophers and I do not intend to retill old ground, besides the fact that a detailed refutation of theories positing a ghostly mental intermediary between the states of affairs of the percipient's body and environment and his perceptual experiences is tangential to my present purposes. However, it is worth noting here that the problems concerning the indeterminateness of many perceptions which arise regarding the postulation of sense-data as determinate and immediately perceptible entities are neatly resolved by the above reduction of "impressions" and "ideas" into a single type of entity, propositional episodes.

As a representative of this problem for the sense-datum theorist, consider the speckled hen case. One sees the hen but does not see precisely how many speckles the hen has. This implies that if perception is to be explicated in terms of sense-data, then those sensory items will have to be either indeterminate vis-a-vis speckledness or, if determinate in this respect, the percipient must be unaware of that determinate property. These two possibilities present a dilemma since existent entities, as opposed to ways of experiencing, etc., are necessarily determinate (though some of their features may not be determinable by certain methods) and sense-data are introduced into theories of perception to explain what percipients are immediately aware of since it is thought that states of a percipient's body and environment cannot themselves be what the percipient is immediately aware of.

Propositional episodes and propositions are themselves determinate. However, propositions can determinately denote something indeterminate as that "the speckled hen has many speckles." Thus indeterminate perception is explicable in terms of propositional episodes, which are identical with perceptual acts, denoting indeterminate facts about the percipient's body and environment.

IV

One persistent notion which resists the identification of the content of sensory experiences with sets of propositional episodes is the idea that visual perception involves mental images and that to imagine, for instance, a scene which one has recently been visually perceiving is to create a mental image "in the mind's eye," a mental image which is similar to but fainter than that involved in the original visual perception.

The images involved in imagining <u>are</u> very similar to the phenomenological means by which we perceive states of affairs in ordinary perception. Three objections apply equally against taking perceptions or imagination as imagistic, as involving a picture-like phenomenological item to the details of which we can be more or less attentive.

(i) When we imagine a face, say, there is no picture-like entity, an "image," which we <u>fix</u> in our attention. Otherwise we could inspect myriad and minute details of imagined faces not perceived when we first conjure up the image. But we cannot. Instead, we imagine no more than what is provided by the sparsity of the beliefs about the face which we can bring to our attention at the moment of imagining and this is why there are no further details of the "image" which we can peruse, why we cannot discover forgotten facts about the actual face imagined.

(ii) That there are no further details of an image beyond those imagined during a moment of imagining implies that the supposition that mental images are like pictures shares an inherent deficiency with the position of the sense-datum theorist. Just as the

sense-datum theorist cannot account for the indeterminateness of many perceptions,[16] so also if imagining and perceiving are conceived of as a sort of picturing, it is impossible to account for the fact that certain states of affairs perceived as objects of imagination and perception are often perceived as indeterminate.

I can imagine the face of a freckled friend without imagining any specific number of freckles on his face, yet holding that "image" of my friend's face firmly in mind, I cannot with careful attention count the number of freckles on his face. For, if I were to proceed to determine the number of freckles on the imagined face, the image I would then be considering would, contrary to the "picture-like" conception of images, not be the same image as the original one. It is not the case that one might momentarily be unable to determine how many freckles an imagined face has. An entity imagined at T_1 has and has no more than precisely those properties which it is imagined as having at T_1. Imagined faces can have determinate or indeterminate numbers of freckles, but then they are different instances of imagining.

When I imagine my friend's face, if I do not also imagine the background behind his head, there is no background to the imagined face. Or, if I imagine a vaguely green background, then the background is vaguely green. Images, if they are thought of like pictures, would be determinate. There are no vague, indefinite, indistinct or unspecific details or areas in a picture. There may, of course, be details in a picture that are difficult to assess, but this

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[16] E.g. the case of the speckled hen, the precise number of whose speckles is not perceived. See footnote 15, p. 151.

is an entirely different matter. Even if hazy or confused, the details of a picture are precise and definite. (Though of course the make-believe facts represented in a picture could be indeterminate. If only one side and a portion of another of a freckled face is pictured, the make-believe number of freckles on the half-obscured side of the face is indeterminate. But the number of spots on the portion of the picture corresponding to the fully-exposed side of the face is determinate while, in contrast, the number of freckles on the exposed side of an imagined face can be indeterminate.) And if images are not determinate, just as if they cannot be studied in detail (as was noted in [i]), then they are not in any informative sense, regarding imagining and perceptions, "like pictures."

I suggest that when we imagine a face, instead of fixing a picture-like image in the "mind's eye," we become attentive to a set of propositional episodes very like those which occur in ordinary perception: propositional episodes whose correspondent propositions express the propositional content of (some of) our beliefs about the actual face which we are imagining. The sets of propositional episodes which acts of imagining are identical with are either consciously entertained and believed--as when I try to imagine state of affairs S--or unconsciously entertained--as when I inadvertently begin to daydream state of affairs S. Propositions can determinately denote vague, indefinite and unspecific states of affairs; they can ascribe a determinate or indeterminate property to an entity. Whereas in one instance of imagining my friend's face, there is a propositional episode the referent of which can become the factual referent of my belief that my friend's face has many (an indeterminate number of)

freckles, in another instance of imagining my friend's actual face, there can be a propositional episode the referent of which can become the factual referent of my belief that my friend's face has, say, six (a specific number of) freckles. Hence, imaginings can involve vague areas or details because they are simply sets of propositional episodes.

Like imaginings, ordinary perceptions can involve perceptions of vague features,[17] or of an absence of features--such as no background for a perceived object--according to whether a possible subset of the set of propositional episodes which comprise the perception is actual and denotes vague states of affairs or is quite simply lacking respecting the determination of certain details of a perception. This indicates that picture-like images are not involved in ordinary perception. Further, possible details of a perceptual field--that is, possible details of the phenomenological content--involved in an act of unreflective consciousness which are not actually perceived during that act are not in fact details of that perceptual field at that moment. I.e. those possible details of the perceptual field are not members of the set of actual conceptualized propositional episodes the complete set of which for any momentary act of perception vis-a-vis a specific sense comprise the totality of the perceptual field of that sense at that moment. Were picture-like images involved in ordinary perception then, as noted in (i), they could be scrutinized and

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[17]Indeterminateness in sensory perceptions is not a counter-example against my position that all perception is perception as. To perceive vague or indeterminate features of the objects of our perceptions is to perceive them <u>as</u>, e.g., colored even though we are uncertain of the exact shade of color or <u>as</u> speckled while the precise number of speckles is not noticed.

studied in detail.[18] All possible details of a perceptual field are like pains: if we are not (perhaps unconsciously) aware of them, they do not exist.

(iii) There is a vicious infinite regress in the notion that imaginings or ordinary perception involve a picture-like "image." (This infinite regress counts against a picturing interpretation of imagining even if one rejects the idea that ordinary sense perception involves "images" of this picture-like type.) If we explain the process of perception and imagining by means of picture-like images (as intermediaries in the perception case) which the percipient can scrutinize for details, by what means does the percipient become aware of the details of the "image"? Another "image"?

If it is replied here that the mind simply "inspects" the images, then why cannot the mind just attend to the details of the external state of affairs being perceived or, for imagining, just entertain a set of ideas which expresses the "details" of the image? In both cases awarenesses will be formed of propositions which are or can become the subjects of (reflective) beliefs. In this respect the postulation of a picture-like image does not serve any unfulfilled

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[18] We are misled into thinking that all the minute and myriad detail which we can become aware of in our perceptual field is already there, already "pictured," and only awaits our closer scrutiny because we conflate acts of unreflective and acts of reflective consciousness. Because with scrupulous attention during acts of reflective consciousness we can always become aware of minute details of our sensory fields we feel that we previously perceived those details and simply did not attend to them. Acts of reflective consciousness are not identical to acts of unreflective consciousness and an act of unreflective consciousness at T_2 is not the same act of unreflective consciousness which occurred at T_1 and which, remembered at T_3, seems to possess, but unnoticed, the same details as the unreflective act at T_1.

explanatory function.

Regarding perception in particular, scrutinizing the details of picture-like images is no different in kind from attending to the details of the table, or painting, in front of one: hence the apparent advance in the analysis of perception of having moved from external objects to mental entities is spurious. Imagistic explanations of perception, in the picture-like sense of "image," do not explain the phenomenological means of perception. Such explanations only provide another entity, the "image," whose perception, as much as that of tables and paintings, needs to be explained.[19]

An image is a logical construct upon the sets of propositional episodes which are acts of imagining (or perception if one holds that we perceive by means of images). The propositional episodes involved in imagining real states of affairs, like those involved in perception, are either true or false, or partially true and partially false: false insofar as one fails in attempt to imagine correctly the actual features of an entity; otherwise true. As a logical construct, an

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[19]With the reduction of acts of imagining to propositional episodes and the dissolution of the notion that a picture-like "image" is involved in ordinary perception, it now becomes even clearer that, as discussed at the end of Chapter Two, whatever conflict arises between the theological and mystic literalist discourses vis-a-vis corporeal visions arises equally with regard to imaginary visions. Attempts to distinguish between the kind of phenomenological content in instances of ordinary perception and the "images" involved in imaginings or imaginary visions fail. Whether or not one regards the former to involve images, the phenomenological content of both ordinary perceptual acts and imaginings and the pseudo-imaginings of imaginary visions consists in sets of propositional episodes. (Their difference is found in differing meta-properties. Imaginings can be manipulated at will; the phenomenological content of ordinary and imaginary vision acts of perception cannot, etc.) Whatever propositional episodes might be involved in an imaginary vision, exactly similar propositional episodes could be involved in a corporeal vision.

image provides unity and continuity to the propositional episodes of experience and, as a logical construct, it is only formed during states of reflective consciousness. It is the unity and the appearance of continuity provided by the imposition of the logical construct of an image on the sets of propositional episodes which are acts of imagining (or perception) which give us the false sense that there are further details to an image. They give us the false sense that there are further details, which we can inspect through increased attentiveness, which are additional to and fill out the rest of the "picture" for those propositional episodes which are in fact the totality of a particular act of imagining (or perception).[20]

V

It might be objected here that the contents of perception are not always conceptualized--more specifically that the phenomenological content of perceptual acts cannot always be propositional episodes--because there is a perfectly ordinary sense of perception verbs in which they denote purely physical, non-mental and hence pre-

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[20]As I read him, Daniel Dennett draws a similar distinction between images and "pictures" in Content and Consciousness (New York, 1969), pp. 135 f., by calling imagining "depictional" or "descriptional" and "not pictorial."

If one is inclined to dismiss this analysis of perception because of a feeling that episodic states of consciousness of propositions, no matter how rapidly replaced by their successors, could not, as a picture-like entity could, convey the plethora of information which we could potentially assimilate during perception, (i) I suggest that we tend to grossly overestimate the amount of information made available by an act of perception and (ii) in any event, it is interesting and perhaps helpful in this regard to note that, I take it, by reading we can more readily assimilate information which has already been put in the propositional form of sentences than we can assimilate information presented non-propositionally in a movie or via television.

intellectual, operations. For instance we say, "He must have seen your book. It was in plain sight (i.e. right in front of his eyes) when he was searching the desk top," meaning nothing more than that, given normal light conditions, etc., and given that his eyes (optic nerve, etc.) were in normal working order and that he was using them, our searcher must have set eyes on the book and must have visually discriminated it from its environment. Unexceptional instances of perception such as these, it is suggested, logically presuppose no possession of particular concepts (a primitive aborigine unacquainted with books might be our searcher). They presuppose no recognition or even noticing of the object in question. Hence, it is suggested, instances of perception of this sort are pre-conceptualization and outside the pale of those perceptions which the mind does order.

In Seeing and Knowing, Fred Dretske refers to this hypothesized sort of visual perception as "non-epistemic seeing."[21] Fundamentally, Dretske designates "non-epistemic seeing" as a type of seeing which entails no positive belief content. Since perceiving is not identical with belief acquisition, there will be many instances of perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness which will not involve acquiring beliefs and we might well group these into a type. However, I think Dretske is mistaken in the stronger claim which he makes in

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[21]Fred Dretske, Seeing and Knowing (Chicago, 1969), pp. 20-30. In "Seeing" (repr. in Perceiving, Sensing and Knowing, ed. Robert J. Swartz [Garden City, N.Y., 1965], pp. 49-67), G. J. Warnock holds a similar position:

> As long as there is reason to hold that I . . . "set eyes on" the man who is in fact Lloyd George, then there is reason to say that I saw him, even though I then neither made, nor could have made, any judgment at all, either right or wrong, about who or what it was that I saw. (p. 52)

characterizing "non-epistemic seeing" that "ignorance of x does not impair one's vision of x,"[22] and that if we "strip away from a given perceptual act all the accretions [e.g. beliefs, habitual patterns of inference] due to past experience . . . [we are left with] as the sensory core or the directly given, precisely the same plump juicy tomato with which we began."[23] Thus in delineating the notion of a type of seeing which entails no belief content he suggests that none of our beliefs (or other portions of our conceptual schemas) affect the content of this sort of perceptual act and that there is a "pure" sensory core which is the content of the perceptual act. Dretske need not pursue this line of reasoning to counter the denial that there are instances of seeing apart from the acquisition of beliefs. For, as I have attempted to argue, it is true both that there are instances of seeing (and other types of perception) which do not involve the acquisition of belief and that the mind radically conceptualizes all perceptual experience.

Centrally, I differ with Dretske by claiming that visual discrimination, as well as the other sorts of perceptual discrimination, is the mark of the mind's conceptualization of experience and, as such, cannot be the essence of a kind of "non-epistemic seeing" which occurs apart from the conceptualizing activity of the mind. The sensory core--the uninterpreted, unjudged, uninferred phenomenological content--of the specific experience he cites might be a "plump juicy tomato." But plumpness, juiciness, tomatohood, unified physical

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[22]Dretske, Seeing and Knowing, p. 8.

[23]Ibid., p. 75.

object, are all equally conceptualized contents of experience. The experience of the tomato could even have been an unreflective perception of a discrete red patch or just a "something," but these would still be conceptualized experiences.

Moreover, Dretske has distinguished a parasitic rather than a central usage of "see," with the notion of a "non-epistemic seeing" as a seeing which involves only setting one's eyes on the "perceived" object. It is true that we sometimes use "see" in this sense, but that usage derives its meaning from the central instances of seeing where the object of the perceptual act is perceived by means of a discriminable, though perhaps not consciously discriminated, discrete entity in the uninterpreted phenomenological content of perceptual experience. Consider Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit figure. Now it is seen as a set of lines, now as Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit, now as a duck, now as a rabbit. Each is a conceptualized experience and each conceptualized experience at the moment of its occurrence usually replaces and precludes the others. And we might say, for example, "I saw the duck-rabbit, but I did not really see it. I only saw a drawing of a rabbit. (Later I learned it was Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit drawing that I was looking at.)" What can we possibly mean by such expressions except that to see X is to see X as something. Merely to rest one's eyes on an object is to see it only in an extended, parasitic sense.

We have another, unambiguous locution to mark the use of "see" which Dretske calls "non-epistemic." We can (really) see objects and events, or only look at them.[24] We can look at objects and events

[24]There is some indication in his own writing that "look at"

apart from any intellectual activity of the mind. To see an object or event, or in general genuinely to perceive an object or event, it must be perceived as something--that is, the phenomenological content of the experience must be conceptualized. Whatever is in our sensory field--e.g. it is located in front of us, is of medium size, etc.--but is not the referent of a set of propositional episodes composing part of the phenomenological content of a perceptual experience, is not actually seen, though the percipient may be looking at it. Thus, we can meaningfully say, "He's looking at X, but he has not seen it yet." Here we mean that the percipient has not yet discriminated X as something (and usually we mean as X).

For P to unreflectively see X at T_1, as opposed to looking at X, is to say that had P reflected at T_1, P could have become consciously aware at T_1 that he was (it would seem to him) observing something as Y, where Y is what X looked like to P at T_1. For an object or state of affairs to look like something to a percipient is for his perceptual experience of that object or state of affairs to be conceptualized. Hence two percipients could look at (what we would regard as) the same object, say what we would regard as an airplane, and see two different things. They might see, e.g., an airplane and a an unidentified flying object, if one does not possess the concept "airplane" which the other possesses and with which his mind conceptualizes his experience. Therefore, I feel that Dretske is mistaken both in implying that perceptual differentiation is not conceptual-

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is the sense of "see" which Dretske is isolating. For he alternates between "see" and "look at" to denote the same act. (See Dretske, Seeing and Knowing, p. 43.)

ization and in holding that if a percipient, under normal conditions, looks at a visually perceptible object, he thereby sees that object in the sense of visually differentiating it. On the view presented here, to see is to be occurrently conscious of a conceptualized phenomenological content of visual experience and for the mind to conceptualize experience in this manner involves more than merely to look at something. Excluding, then, "looking at" as a type of genuine perceptual experience, "non-epistemic seeing" or "looking at" will not denote exceptions to the position that a percipient's conceptual schema orders all of his perceptual experiences.

VI

In Religion and Science, Bertrand Russell notes this problematic feature of mystical experiences in his discussion of the credibility of mystic claims:

> Catholics, but not Protestants, may have visions in which the Virgin appears; Christians and Mohammedans, but not Buddhists, may have great truths revealed to them by the Archangel Gabriel . . . [25]

We are now in a position to see why mystics tend in their visions, where vision rules are not operative, to see entities which accord with their expectations, entities which are religion specific to the mystic's own religion; we will then be able to say something in Chapter Six about the doubts that Russell and others have had about the credibility of such experiences.

In Seeing and Knowing, Dretske is concerned that if there were no non-epistemic way of seeing then percipients with "radically dif-

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[25] Bertrand Russell, Religion and Science (London, 1935) p. 180.

ferent beliefs"[26] could not see the same things. His concern is well-founded. Percipients who, in his terms, "diverge significantly in conceptual orientation" cannot perceive the same things. This is precisely because, while there are non-belief-acquisitional instances of perceiving, what a percipient perceives in any instance of perceiving is importantly determined by his conceptual schema--by his past "intellectual life" in the form of the beliefs, concepts, anticipations, dispositions to make certain inferences, etc., already acquired by the percipient. If my position that there is no "non-epistemic" way of seeing is accepted, the character of all of the perceptions of mystics, just like that of the perceptions of any other percipient, will depend on the conceptual structure of the mystics' conceptual schemas. Since all perceptual experience is conceptualized by the mind, every perception of the mystic, which is more than a mere discrimination of an entity as a "something" in contrast to the world, will be a perception of something as a particular object or state of affairs. And what particular objects or states of affairs the mystic will see something as is importantly determined by the conceptual structure of his conceptual schema.

What external objects or states of affairs are seen as is a function of the mystic's conceptual schema (1) insofar as the general limits of the conceptual structure of his conceptual schema limit his possible perceptions and (2) insofar as the conceptual structure of his conceptual schema is such that for certain "outputs" of the physiological sense-reception processes, his conceptual schema orders

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[26] Dretske, Seeing and Knowing, p. 76.

that "output" as the perception of something as X (where X is some particular). (1) can be explained more fully as follows. First, what is delimited as logically possible by the conceptual structure of the percipient's conceptual schema will limit his possible experience. Second, since the mind's ordering of experience is a priori,[27] if a percipient, P, does not at T possess a concept, "C," denoting a class of entities, C's, P cannot at T experience something as C. Call E the particular conceptualized momentary experience which is P's acquisition of "C." E cannot affect P's experience at T if E occurs at or subsequent to T.

Mystics, then, tend in their visions in which vision rules are not operative to perceive entities which accord with their expectations because, like any ordinary percipient, their beliefs about what they can expect to experience, their concepts, their dispositions to make certain inferences--in short their conceptual schemas--will limit and order their experiences. There are no "pure presentations," independent of the mind's activity, which are the content of unreflective acts of perceptual awareness. A mystic who does not possess the concept of the Virgin Mary will not perceive an entity in a perceived vision as the Virgin Mary; one who does possess this concept can perceive an entity in his vision as the Virgin Mary. Further, two mystics who are, for example, looking at the same external state of affairs, could see different things given appropriate differences in their conceptual schemas. A Christian mystic might see, in a perceived vision not involving vision rules, Christ as God while a Sufi mystic, who was unaware of the Christian notion of the divinity of Christ,

[27]See p. 136.

looking at the same external state of affairs comprising the perceived vision could merely see a great prophet. This is no different in kind from the fact that whereas you or I might look at an airplane and see it as an airplane, an aborigine who does not possess the concept "airplane" may simply see it as a flying object or a large bird (and he cannot see it, given his present conceptual schema, as an airplane).

As we have seen in Chapter Three, in perceived visions in which vision rules are operative, the game of vision rules in which the percipient participates forms a portion of the structure of the percipient's conceptual schema which greatly orders his perceptions. Other portions of the conceptual structure of his conceptual schema, though, will order the "output" of his physiological sense-reception processes such that he literally perceives X (from which, together with the operative vision rules, it is a visionary truth that he perceives Y). Also, as noted in Chapter Three, the use of different vision rules--just as, for ordinary perceptions, different conceptual structures in two percipients' conceptual schemas--will result in two percipients perceiving the same phenomenon but perceiving it as two different things (as two different sets of visionary truths).

In fact, although it is sparse, there is some recognition in the mystic literature of this effect which the mystic's past "intellectual life" has on his perceptions. The Zohar says about a form in which God appeared that:

> Even that similitude was a semblance of the Holy One . . . not as he is in his very place . . . but as the King manifesting his might of dominion over his entire creation, and thus appearing to each one of his creatures as each can grasp him.[28]

[28] Zohar, p. 77 (italics mine).

A strikingly similar idea is expressed by the Moslem mystic Ibn al-Arabi regarding the Beatific Vision:

> In the Beatific Vision God manifests Himself to the elect in a general epiphany which, nevertheless, assumes various forms corresponding to the mental conceptions of God formed by the faithful on earth. There is, then, one single epiphany, which is multiple only by reason of the difference of forms by which it is received. . . . each experiencing the Vision according to the knowledge of the Divine dogma or dogmas gained by him on earth.[29]

And in the theological literature, Maimonides says that prophesy is "a perfection acquired in a dream or a vision" and then goes on to declare that:

> A person must satisfy the following conditions before he can become a prophet . . . [among which he includes that] his thoughts must be engaged in lofty matters; his attention directed to the knowledge of God, the consideration of His works, and of that which he must believe in this respect. . . . A man who satisfies these conditions . . . will undoubtedly perceive nothing but things very extraordinary and divine, and see nothing but God and His angels.[30]

However, although the mind's radical conceptualization of all

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[29] Miguel Asin Palacio, Islam and the Divine Comedy (London, 1926), cited in Walter Stace, The Teachings of the Mystics (New York, 1960), pp. 212-213 (italics mine).

[30] Maimonides, Guide, Pt. II, Ch. 36.

Applying Scholem's point to the content of mystical experiences, we can agree with Gerschom Scholem's general point that:

> The outward forms of mystical religion within the orbit of a given religion are to a large extent shaped by the positive content and values recognized and glorified in that religion. We cannot, therefore, expect the physiognomy of Jewish mysticism to be the same as that of Catholic mysticism, Anabaptism or Moslem Sufism. The particular aspects of Christian mysticism, which are connected with the person of the Saviour and mediator between God and man, the mystical interpretation of the Passion of Christ, which is repeated in the personal experience of the individual--all this is foreign to Judaism, and also to its mystics. Their ideas proceed from the concepts and values peculiar to Judaism . . . (Scholem, Jewish Mysticism, p. 10)

perceptual experience explains why mystics tend to perceive entities which accord with their expectations, surely, it can be objected, their perceptions cannot all be true. It would seem that they cannot all be true because two mystics can perceive the same external phenomenon as two different things and because, while perceiving different phenomena, the ontological facts supported by different mystics' perceptions (apparently) would be contradictory. This question must be left to the last chapter of this essay.

VII

In The Graces of Interior Prayer, Anton Poulain worries about the question,

> By what right is this God, or rather this confused vague, inexpressable reality . . . identified with one or another of the pre-existing conceptions of the divinity? How, to be exact, do contemplative Catholics know that it is the God of the Christian tradition and not that of the Buddhists, or Pantheists, or one of those deities of whom various philosophers have dreamed?

We now know why mystics tend to perceive in their visions entities which accord with their expectations. But when, say, Isaiah claims to see God, could there be any structural features of his perception which would give him any reasonable certitude of having recognized God? Is not his claim that he has experienced God just an interpretation of his experience? Walter Stace insists in The Teachings of the Mystics (he is talking about non-sensuous experiences), that it is important to distinguish the interpretation of an experience from the experience itself and he states that:

> The undifferentiated unity is interpreted by Eckhart and Ruysbroeck in terms of the Trinitarian conception of God, but by the Islamic mystics as the unitarian God of Islam,

> and by the leading school of the Vedantists as a more impersonal absolute.[31]

Why suppose, for example, that the Islamic mystics are interpreting and not just describing their experiences? The general problems raised by these questions must be answered before an answer can be given--a task beyond the scope of this essay--to whether or not mystics could or do know that the entities in their visions are the entities which they claim to perceive. In order to distinguish the interpretation of a mystical experience from the experience in itself as a perception of something as something, it will be necessary to further analyze the notion of a "pure" unconceptualized element in sense experience.

C. I. Lewis, who holds a view similar to that presented here of the role in perception of our conceptual schemas (though he does not call them that), describes perceptual experience as follows:

> There are in experience these two elements, something given and the interpretation or construction put upon it. . . . the criteria of givenness [are] . . . first, its specific sensuous or feeling-character, and second, that the mode of thought can neither create nor alter it--that it remains unaffected by any change of mental attitude or interest. It is the second of these criteria which is definitive; the first alone is not sufficient . . . the distinction between this element of interpretation and the given is emphasized by the fact that the latter is what remains unaltered, no matter what our interests, no matter how we think or conceive. I can apprehend this thing as pen or rubber or cylinder, but I cannot, by taking thought, discover it as paper or soft or cubical.[32]

I agree with Lewis that there is a given in perceptual experience--"that which remains untouched and unaltered, however it is construed

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[31]Stace, The Teachings of the Mystics, p. 24 (italics mine).

[32]C. I. Lewis, Mind and the World Order (New York, 1956), pp. 48, 66, and 52.

by thought"--and that this "given is in, not before, experience . . . the given never exists in isolation in any experience or state of consciousness."[33] There are no "pure" "appearings" or "sense data" which we become aware of in perceptual experience. Yet the afferent physiological processes of sense reception provide[34] a given element for perceptual experience.

As an abstraction, we can distinguish this given from the mind's ordering of perceptual experience even though every perceptual experience is a construction (but not, as we shall see, an interpretation) on the given. Were there no distinction between the given and the mind's ordering, perceptual error would be inexplicable as long as the percipient was carefully attentive to the phenomenological content of his experience. Further, that there is a given in perceptual experience is indicated by the following fact. For participants in very similar language games regarding the possible constituents of reality, the resultant possibility of agreement about veridical perception is reflected in agreement about the "brute-fact" features of their perceptions. E.g. we, like Lewis, find that we "can apprehend this thing as pen or rubber or cylinder, but . . . cannot, by taking thought, discover it as paper or soft or cubical."

However, the brute-fact element of unreflective perceptual experience is not, as Lewis suggests,[35] itself the given. Although Lewis thinks that the given is an abstraction, something which we

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[33]Ibid., pp. 55 and 54.

[34]I am not quite sure how I would want to make this notion more precise.

[35]Lewis, Mind and the World Order, p. 57.

must postulate as an element of perceptual experience given the character of that experience, and that the given is itself "ineffable," Lewis is more sure than I am of our ability to isolate,[36] though not describe, the given. It seems to me that the "brute-fact" element of perception is simply one aspect of particular features of the propositional episodes which are our perceptual acts, and what features of each set of propositional episodes comprising a particular act of perception possess this "bruteness" is determined by the percipient's conceptual schema, as well as by the "output" of the physiological sense-reception processes. I do not see how it can be otherwise than that the radical conceptualizing of the phenomenological content of perceptual experience includes the determination, partially delimited by the "output" of the sense-reception processes, of which features of that content possess this element of "bruteness." Given my present conceptual schema, I cannot, of course, perceive a normal writing pen as cubical or soft, but if I lacked the concept of pen or cylinder, neither could I, given that conceptual schema, perceive it as a pen or a cylindrical object.

It is impossible to strip the phenomenological content of our sensory experiences of the element of conceptualization provided by the mind in order to arrive at a "pure" sensory core. It is impossible even to isolate, much less describe, the "pure" given in perceptual experience. There is only one "material" in the phenomenological content of perceptual experience--a conceptualized content--which has a partial bruteness as well as a propositional form, and

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[36] Ibid., p. 52

these two aspects are inextricably wedded. Their connection is logical and inescapable: to perceive is to perceive something real as something. Our conceptual schemas importantly determine the form (as well as delimiting the possible content) of the phenomenological contents of perceptual acts even when that form or logical type is the brute-fact element in perception. Thus, whereas I agree with Lewis that "the given [for a particular sensory stimulus] is qualitatively no different than it would be if I were an infant or an ignorant savage,"[37] the given and the brute-fact elements of our perceptual experiences cannot be identical since what an infant or an "ignorant savage" will perceive as brute in his perceptual experiences will often be different from what you or I with our highly-developed and complex western scientific conceptual schemas will perceive as brute.

Lewis appeals to his reader to discover the given phenomenologically in his perceptual experience.[38] While we must begin by turning to the phenomenology of our perceptual acts in order to provide an accurate analysis of the structure of those acts, this is one place where the appeal to phenomenological introspection can have only limited success. This introspection will not enable us to isolate the given in our experience; it will only enable us to see that there must be a given.

From the fact that we can agree about veridical perceptions with others sharing very similar language games regarding the possible constituents of reality, we can conclude that the "brute-fact" features of our perceptual experiences have an important correlation

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[37] Ibid., p. 50.

[38] Ibid., p. 55.

with that given which will be an element of the perceptual experience of any percipient with similar physiological processes of sense reception who experiences sensory stimuli exactly similar to that which we experience. And the fact of perceptual error despite close attention to the phenomenological content of experiences indicates that there is a given in perceptual experience. But all that we can know is that there is an element in our perceptual experiences which remains unaltered however construed by our thought: we cannot know that what is now unaltered is unalterable; we cannot be certain that the brute-fact elements in our perceptual experiences are identical with the given.

It might be objected here that if which features of the phenomenological content of perceptual experiences possesses this "brute-fact" element is importantly determined by the percipient's conceptual schema, then there would be little difference between perceiving and merely entertaining a set of propositions. However, when we imagine or hypothesize states of affairs we can manipulate the willfully-entertained propositional episodes at will. This, at least in part, distinguishes imagining from having genuine sense perceptions since in the latter case certain elements--i.e. the "brute-fact" elements--of the phenomenological content of the perceptual act cannot be manipulated at will. We cannot manipulate these elements because the referent of this mind-imposed bruteness is states of affairs categorized, in accordance with the conceptual structure of our conceptual schemas, as possible actual states of affairs given a specific type of "output" of the sense-reception processes. That categorization is a priori at a temporal moment, T, relative to each momentary concep-

tualized experience, E, occurring at T. (Why this a priori categorization of the possible actual which determines what is conceptualized as "brute-fact" is neither capricious nor erratic is discussed in Chapter Five, Section I.)

Lewis is also wrong, to my mind, in holding that, besides the given, the second element in perceptual experience is an "interpretation" put upon the given. At one point in Mind and the World Order he suggests about a perception of a penny that:

> 'This penny is round'; calling what is presented 'a penny' is interpretive to at least the same degree as judging it to be round. What the subject expresses is an interpretation as much as the predicate.[39]

Lewis fails to distinguish adequately between reflective interpretation of perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness and the reportorial, non-interpretive function of "is ϕ" when it is used during an act of reflective consciousness to report the phenomenological content of a perceptual act of unreflective consciousness which is the object of the reflective act. The phenomenological content of every perceptual act of unreflective consciousness is radically conceptualized--whether or not this conceptualized phenomenological content is, during an act of reflective consciousness, then interpreted-- and as such can be reported apart from an interpretation. "Is ϕ" and not "looks ϕ" is a proper report of ordinary perceptual acts of unreflective consciousness since the use of the latter locution indicates that the percipient feels that he has reason to be unsure about whether the external physical state of affairs which he is perceiving is as it looks.

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[39]Ibid., p. 277.

Now, Walter Stace is right to insist in Mysticism and Philosophy that it is important to distinguish mystical experiences themselves from interpretations of those experiences.[40] But, given the foregoing, Stace is wrong to insist that,

> If a man says, "I see a red colour," this is a low-level interpretation, since it involves nothing except simple classificatory concepts. . . . if a mystic speaks of the experience of "an undifferentiated distinctionless unity," this mere report or description using only classificatory words may be regarded as a low-level interpretation. But this is being more fussily precise than is usually necessary, since for all intents and purposes it is just a description. If a mystic says that he experiences a "mystical union with the Creator of the universe," this is a high-level interpretation since it includes far more intellectual addition than a mere descriptive report. It includes an assumption about the origin of the world and a belief in the existence of a personal God.[41]

It is true that concepts such as red are less complex than concepts such as God. But the complexity of a concept has nothing, in and of itself, to do with whether the use of that concept to describe a perceptual experience is an interpretation of that experience. Once one accepts the notion, which Stace does not, that there are no "pure," unconceptualized experiences—and even more fundamentally that we cannot strip our conceptualized experiences of their conceptualizations to discover a "pure," unconceptualized sensory core or even to isolate a "pure" given—then to say that a percipient has a perceptual experience is to say that he perceived something radically conceptualized as something. Since a perceptual experience consists in a set of episodic awarenesses of propositions, it can be reported without interpretation by a series of statements expressing

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[40] Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, p. 31.

[41] Ibid., p. 37.

the propositions expressed by those propositional episodes. Granted, the more complex the concepts involved, the less frequently or likely is a given conceptualized experience. But the radical conceptualization of perceptual experience means that there is no difference in the level of interpretation involved in different unreflective perceptual acts in which something is perceived as (i) a red patch, (ii) a plump juicy tomato, or (iii) God. The non-inferential experience of a tomato is as much a conceptualization of the "output" of our sense-reception processes as the non-inferential experience of a red patch.

Now, if a mystic claims that he has had a mystical experience of God or of an angel, his claim need not be an interpretation of his experience. If God and angels have proper sense-perceptible forms then just as we can non-inferentially recognize or just directly perceive another person if we are sufficiently acquainted with his physical characteristics, mystics acquainted with the proper sense-perceptible forms of God or angels could non-inferentially recognize or directly perceive these beings. Out of the corner of my eye I unreflectively perceive something as a red patch; on the street I recognize, in an instance of reflective perception, my best friend; in a perceived vision not involving vision rules a mystic could, by looking at the appropriate proper sense-perceptible form, during an act of unreflective perception perceive, and during an act of reflective perception recognize, God or an angel.

Moreover, in perceived visions in which vision rules are operative, God or an angel could be recognized by the percipient as an entity in his vision and this may well not be an interpretation of the mystic's experience. The mystic could consciously check the fea-

tures of the vision and then, using the appropriate vision rules, determine by inference that God or an angel was a figure in his vision. But he might simply recognize God or an angel "straight-off" in much the same way as we can often look at a painting and, by means of the operative rules of make-believe but not through a conscious inference, immediately recognize a figure in the painting. If a percipient participates in a game of vision rules, then the conceptual structure of those rules will be part of his conceptual schema. Whether a mystic non-inferentially recognizes or just directly perceives God or an angel in a perceived vision in which vision rules are not operative, or whether he perceives these beings in a perceived vision (implicitly) by means of vision rules apart from any inference, the content of the perception, as in all perceptual experience, will be ordered by the percipient's conceptual schema, and no interpretation of the experience will be involved.[42]

Also, as pointed out in Chapter Two, if a mystic recognizes

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[42]In view of these last remarks, Anton Poulain offers an interesting answer to his concern, with which this section opened, about the puzzle of how mystics could have any certitude of correctly identifying entities in their visions given that they tend to perceive entities which accord with their expectations. Poulain suggests in answer to the question of how "do contemplative Catholics know that it is the God of the Christian tradition and not that of the Buddhists, or Pantheists [which they experience]?" that (Catholic) mystics are

> already provided with a very definite credo; they know their catechism. But in the brilliant light by which they are inundated, they declare that they recognise the Sovereign Being of which this familiar work has spoken. (Poulain, Graces, p. 584)

To the mystic's knowledge of the orthodox theological doctrines, we will want to add the mystic's knowledge of mystical writings and his discipleship among other mystics as well as the beliefs he acquired about his previous mystical experiences. But, as Poulain's remarks suggest, the mystic's conceptual schema could enable him to recognize God (and angels) in his experiences.

or just perceives God or an angel by perceiving the proper sense-perceptible form of God or of the angel, then there will be a conceptual connection between his perception of the proper sense-perceptible form and his perception of God or of the angel. His recognition of these beings will not be based on a mere empirical evidential connection between the perception of the form and the perception of God or an angel; his recognition will not be based on weak empirical evidence as is, e.g., the determination that Richard is the wearer of the mastodon costume which the viewers did not see him enter and which entirely hides him from view.

For any particular mystical experience in which God (or an angel) is purportedly perceived by means of His (or its) proper sense-perceptible form, the question obviously still remains after these considerations of whether it is God's or an angel's proper sense-perceptible form which is perceptible during the vision. And so, this leaves open the question of whether or not what is purportedly a recognition or non-inferential perception of God or of an angel is in fact a recognition or perception of God or of an angel. (To help determine whether the form he perceives is God's or an angel's proper sense-perceptible form, and hence whether he has perceived or recognized God or an angel, the mystic could check the features of the form he perceived against those accepted as features of the proper sense-perceptible forms of God or angels by other percipients who share the concept of God's or an angel's proper sense-perceptible form.) But it still remains true that a purported recognition or direct perception of an entity in a vision as God or as an angel need not involve an interpretation of the phenomenological content of the vision: it may

be just a report of the vision.

Of course, that the claim to perceive something in a vision as God or as an angel may be reportorial and need not be interpretive is not to say that all the contents of unreflective acts of sense perception are immediately intelligible to their fullest extent or categorized once and for all. All of the phenomenological content of acts of perceptual unreflective consciousness is conceptualized but clearly that does not conflict with the fact that that content, that set of propositional episodes, is subject to interpretation and further classification during either concomitant acts of reflective consciousness or temporally posterior memory-acts.[43] I can, while staring pensively at a large, black bird, infer from its features and my knowledge of the definitive features of the various species that I am looking at a raven rather than a crow, and after hearing a crash in the alley I can glance at the clock and infer that the sound I heard a moment ago was made during the weekly garbage collection.

Some purported experiences of an entity in a vision as God or as an angel will clearly be interpretations of the phenomenological content of the vision and not mere reports. But which claims of such purported experiences are interpretive and not merely reportorial cannot be determined, as Stace suggests, just on the basis of whether or

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[43] If such interpretations of the conceptualized content of perceptual experience radically reclassify the object of the perception, the percipient will, from his later point of view of that reclassification, still be looking at the same thing. In the first example, suppose on further reflection I decide that I am actually looking at a cardboard cut-out of a bird. It would then be the case that previously I was looking at a cardboard cut-out and seeing it as a raven, but now I am looking at a cardboard cut-out and seeing it as a cardboard cut-out of a bird.

not complex concepts like "God" are used in the description of the experience.

FIVE

DIFFERENCES OF CONCEPTUAL SCHEMA --AND PERCEPTION

In this chapter I will analyze the difference of conceptual schemas between the mystic literalists and the users of ordinary theological discourse. This analysis will explain and, together with the considerations in Chapter Six, resolve the apparent contradiction between the claims of the mystic literalists and the orthodox theological position of the users of ordinary religious discourse.

I

Generally, a "difference of conceptual schema(s) between two percipients," or "two groups of percipients," refers in its broadest sense to any variation or contrast in the conceptual structures of the two conceptual schemas possessed by the percipients in question which produces or could in principle produce a difference in how the two sets of percipients experience states of affairs of their body or environment under exactly similar sensory conditions and with similar (though not exactly similar) physiological sense apparatus. Many beliefs are elements in the conceptual structure of a conceptual schema, but differences in belief between percipients will only constitute differences of conceptual schemas if it is both the case that the differing beliefs <u>are</u> constitutive of the respective percipients'

conceptual schemas and that the resultant differences in the conceptual structures of the percipients' conceptual schemas produce or could in principle produce a difference in how the percipients experience states of affairs of their body and environment given exactly similar sense stimuli and similar physiological sense-reception processes.

The issue involving differences of conceptual schemas in this essay will not concern the more usual form of the so-called Whorf hypothesis--viz. the suggestion, championed by Benjamin Whorf, that in certain instances different languages embody different conceptual schemas. Rather, since only western mystics, and even more specifically the Christian mystics of the high Middle Ages, are of primary concern here, I will focus on the notion of a difference of conceptual schemas within a single language or language family--either English, as in the case of, e.g., Julian of Norwich, or, more broadly, either the western Indo-European language family or the Semitic language family.

Recently, Kendall Walton has offered an analysis of a "difference of conceptual schemes [i.e. schemas]" which is at variance with the broad interpretation which I wish to give this locution. He suggests that a difference of concepts is not itself sufficient for a difference of conceptual schemes (schemas). For in certain cases of perception involving a difference of concepts between the percipients, "the difference," he says, "is in what is experienced, rather than in how it is experienced."[1] As examples of such cases where a difference

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[1]Kendall Walton, "Linguistic Relativity," in Conceptual Change, eds. Glenn Pearce and Patrick Maynard (Boston, 1973), p. 3.

of concepts does not result in a difference of conceptual schemas, he suggests comparisons between the perceptions of tribes living in hot climates who have no concept of snow and percipients with the concept of snow, and the perceptions of sets of perceivers possessing different concepts because the one group is physiologically unable to perceive certain sensory features which the other can (e.g. color-blind percipients compared to those who are not color-blind).

I agree with Walton that a difference of concepts between two groups of percipients is not sufficient for a difference of conceptual schemas between them. But I want to suggest that, in cases of the sort which he suggests, a difference in what is experienced as well as a difference in how it is experienced mark, under normal conditions, a difference of conceptual schemas. Consider the case of the tribe from the hot climate. Even though Eskimos and they differ in <u>what</u> they experience--only the former experiencing snow--were they both to happen upon what we would call a snow bank, there might well be a difference in <u>how</u> they experience the snow. The Eskimos may in their experience become aware of propositional episodes about <u>snow</u> as part of the phenomenological content of their experience while the members of the other tribe become aware of propositional episodes about white dirt, or a white cloth, etc. (Although given <u>our</u> conceptual schemas, <u>we</u> would say that both are experiencing <u>snow</u> as something.) <u>What</u> one experiences is determined by <u>how</u> the "output" of the physiological sense-reception processes is conceptualized. Both (1) what is subsumed in our conceptual schema under the category of possible actual particulars and thus what features of the phenomenological content of our perceptual acts will be conceptualized as having a brute-fact

character, and (2) how we experience what we categorize as actual particulars determine the subjects as well as the predicates of the phenomenological content of our perceptual experiences. What we experience and how we experience it are logically inseparable.[2] A more exact delineation of a difference of conceptual schemas between percipients is a variation or contrast in the conceptual structures of their respective conceptual schemas which produces or could in principle produce a difference in what states of affairs of their bodies and environment they experience, and how they experience these states of affairs given exactly similar sensory conditions and similar sense-reception processes.[3]

It does not follow from the fact that percipients have different conceptual schemas that there will be a difference in how and what percipients perceive under exactly similar relevant sensory conditions and given similar physiological sense-reception processes. E.g. it is, I suppose, logically possible that without altering the percipients' conceptual schemas, such as through the addition of new concepts, and as long as the relevant sense stimuli were causally

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[2]As will be explained more fully in the next chapter, what we experience, just as how we experience it, is determined by the conceptual interrelationships within our conceptual schemas and what there is to experience, what are the constituents of reality, is relative to each individual conceptual schema.

[3]A qualification should be added here to the stipulation that the physiological sense-reception processes be similar. Suppose one is interested in the question of whether two groups of percipients have a difference of conceptual schema subsets regarding some particular sense, say sight. To answer this sort of question it need only be the case that the two groups of percipients possess similar sense-reception processes for the sense of sight. Even if they had very different processes of sense reception for other senses, it would in principle be possible to determine if the two groups of percipients did or did not share a conceptual schema subset for visual perception.

efficacious in the percipients' perceptions, divine intervention could ensure similar phenomenal experiences among percipients with different conceptual schemas.[4] Nor, clearly, is a difference in how and what different percipients perceive, given a sameness of sensory conditions and of physiological processes of sense reception, a sufficient condition of a difference of conceptual schemas. There is a conceptual connection, though, between differences of perception and differences of conceptual schemas, the former being, in a Wittgensteinian sense, a criterion of the latter. I will take a state of affairs, S, to be a criterion of the applicability of the predicate P if, in virtue of the meaning of P, the occurrence of S under what are regarded as the relevant normal conditions justifies the predication of P.[5] The occurrence of S under the relevant normal conditions justifies the predication of P, but even though justified this predication may be disputable--e.g. an opponent of this predication might argue that while all the generally relevant normal conditions hold in a particular case, there is an additional condition making the predication of P dubious.[6]

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[4]For example, through divine intervention a member of the tribe from the hot climate who does not possess the concept of snow might, in looking at what we call a snow bank, become aware of a propositional episode which involved his seeing something as snow though it would not be until after he later acquired the concept of snow that he would understand that proposition.

[5]This is essentially C. S. Chihara's and J. A. Fodor's characterization of Wittgenstein's notion of "criteria" in "Operationalism and Ordinary Language," in Wittgenstein: the Philosophical Investigations, ed. George Pitcher (Garden City, N.Y., 1966), p. 397. As an analogy to the notion of criteria, Chihara and Fodor suggest that, because of the meaning of "scoring a basket" in basketball, the ball going through the basket satisfies a criterion for scoring a basket under normal conditions.

[6]Call this additional condition C. Not-C will be a normal condition but one that is not ordinarily considered relevant to justify-

For someone to possess a particular concept is analyzable in terms of dispositions to act, where "act" is used in a broad sense to refer to overt bodily acts, mental acts, speech acts, etc. Differences of conceptual schemas thus entail differences in dispositions to act and these latter differences are in part differences in dispositions to have particular sorts of perceptions under certain conditions. A criterion of a "difference of conceptual schemas" between two groups of percipients is a difference in what they perceive and how they experience it, given exactly similar relevant sensory stimuli (e.g. light of a particular wave length) and similar sense organs and sense-reception afferent nervous systems. That is, a criterion of a "difference of conceptual schemas" is a difference in the phenomenological content[7] of the percipients' experiences which is not attributable merely to a difference of sense stimuli and which would not have occurred had there been no physiological difference in their sense-reception processes at the time of the occurrence of the experience in question.

Therefore, I reject Walton's suggestion that people from a hot climate without the concept of snow and those with the concept of snow will not thereby exhibit a difference of conceptual schemas as well as

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ing the predication of P. For instance, suppose C is "hovering in the air." Normally if a basketball player does not foul, does not carry the ball without dribbling, etc., and propels the ball through the basket, he scores a basket. Were he to satisfy all these normal conditions, though, but after leaping up hover in the air for ten seconds before dropping the ball into the basket, it would be doubtful that he had scored a basket.

[7]The "phenomenological content" of the respective experiences will not be a "private," inherently unsharable, event since it consists in communicable propositional episodes.

his suggestion that percipients possessing different concepts because of physiological differences do not possess different conceptual schemas. Also, differences of physiological processes of sense reception cannot themselves preclude a difference of conceptual schemas between two percipients since we need to allow for the possibility that a systematic loss of some portion of a percipient's sense-reception processes' "output"--e.g. loss of the necessary physiological "output" for red-green discrimination--will not constitute a change in that percipient's conceptual schema. For, were the appropriate physiological processes restored, the percipient may immediately be able to discriminate, in this case, red and green--i.e. may have continued to fully retain the concepts of red and green.

Color-blind percipients compared with those possessing the full range of normal color vision, and those having already seen snow compared with those percipients who have not, might not exemplify a difference of conceptual schemas by a difference in the phenomenological content of their perceptions in the presence, respectively, of colored surfaces and snow. The difference in their perceptions might immediately disappear given the same sense stimuli from colored surfaces and snow, respectively, and given the rectification of the physiological defects in the color-blind percipient's sense-reception processes. Though I consider this possibility exceedingly unlikely since I feel that our conceptual schemas are acquired for the most part through experience, I see no logical difficulty in the idea of innate concepts or concepts which a percipient comes to possess apart from experience, and whether or not a percipient does or does not possess a particular concept is an empirical matter.

It is obvious then that an exact similarity of sense stimuli is a necessary precondition for regarding the fact of differing perceptions between two groups of percipients as a criterion of a difference of conceptual schemas, and it is easy enough actually to apply this restriction to "test" cases involving groups of percipients. On the other hand, it is also clear that the second necessary restriction, a sameness of physiological afferent proccesses of sense reception, required for differing perceptions to be a criterion for a difference of conceptual schemas between groups of percipients, will be largely impossible to bring about in instances where it is not initially met. Some differences of conceptual schema will not be identifiable given these strictures. However, for the most part it is safe to assume that human percipients who do not have obvious defects in their senses have similar afferent physiological processes of sense perception, and these two restrictions are needed to eliminate the erroneous construal of differing perceptions which are merely the result of differences in the sensory "output" of the physiological sense-reception processes of two groups of perceivers as marking a difference of conceptual schemas.[8]

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[8]The judgment about what is an exact similarity of sense stimuli and physiological afferent processes of sense reception is itself subject to the logical strictures of the conceptual schema of whoever is making the judgment. Since we always think and judge from the point of view of some particular conceptual schema, the judgment that two groups of percipients exhibit an exact similarity of sense stimuli and reception processes as part of the judgment that their conceptual schemas of perception are different is made from within the conceptual structure of the judger's own conceptual schema subset(s) of sameness, sense stimuli and physiological sense-reception processes.

II

Clearly, there are myriad types of differences of conceptual schemas between two percipients or groups of percipients. Primitive aborigines do not possess the concept of airplane. Our possession of this one additional concept beyond those of the aborigine could constitute a type of difference of conceptual schema. If a jet liner flies over both an aborigine and a western man, the latter will most probably non-inferentially perceive, as part of the immediate phenomenological content of his act of seeing, an airplane, while the former might see a strange bird or unidentifiable flying object but not an airplane. Differences of conceptual schemas of this sort, involving conceptual schemas which are merely richer by some moderate number of concepts for one group of perceivers, are exceedingly common.[9] I am concerned in this essay with more complex and consequential cases in which (1) the two groups exhibiting a difference of conceptual schemas either possess very nearly the same set of relevant concepts or possess differing concepts regarding some set of entities, S, in question, yet have the same relative fineness of discrimination in their perception of S in virtue of the concepts which they do possess and (2) the different conceptual schemas under consideration, and the consequent perceptions of the respective perceivers, are mutually

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[9]Also, with regard to the considerations of Chapter Four, we can again see that we do not simply passively perceive a world already structured independently of the mind, the mind contributing nothing to the structuring of our perceptual experiences. This is shown by the fact that not only does each percipient conceptualize the same states of affairs differently at different times--e.g. in the case of Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit--but different percipients conceptualize what either, or a third percipient, would regard as the same state of affairs differently.

incompatible or mutually inconsistent.

There are no doubt a number of satisfactory and interesting criteria of what counts as a non-trivial difference of conceptual schemas between two groups of percipients. At least two useful notions of a difference in conceptual schemas, and the two which I will extensively consider here are the following:

D_1 Two groups of percipients, tribes A and B, have different conceptual schemas if the following conditions hold. (i) The members of both groups have similar afferent physiological processes of sense reception. (ii) Given exactly similar (relevant) sense stimuli, there is an entity, X, which members of A can non-inferentially recognize or perceive, while members of B do not non-inferentially recognize or perceive X and do not think that a non-inferential recognition or perception of X is logically possible.

D_2 Two groups of percipients, tribes A and B, have different conceptual schemas if the following conditions hold. (i) The members of both groups have similar afferent physiological processes of sense reception. (ii) There are two predicates each of which denotes a class of entities possessing a contrary or contradictory ontological status from the entities denoted by the other predicate. (iii) Given exactly similar (relevant) sense stimuli, members of A perceive an entity, X, and regard the extension of the first of those predicates to include X, while the members of B consider X to be included within the class of entities denoted by the second predicate.

In order not to preclude by definition a physicalist position on which

our concepts, the phenomenological content of perceptual experiences, and acts of reflective consciousness are, or are reduceable to, brain states, a "similarity of afferent physiological processes of sense reception" is only meant to be construed as entailing a totality of exactly similar physiological states of those portions of the brain which are necessary for the functioning of the afferent processes of sense reception. Besides these portions of the brain, the rest of the afferent central nervous system and the sense receptors themselves are to be physiologically similar. If this qualification is more or less restrictive than required to allow for a particular physicalist theory then it can be adjusted accordingly.

"Entity" is used here as a neutral term denoting any sort of thing whatever--e.g. an instance of a property, a class, an individual, etc. Notice also that if, for example, a mammal named Fred is recognized, this entity might simply be recognized (whether inferentially or non-inferentially) as a marmot and not as Fred--though one might also simultaneously recognize both Fred and Fred's being a marmot.

By an "inferential recognition or perception" of an entity, X, I mean a recognition or perception of X which involves an inference from the data of our phenomenal field--perhaps from the perceived features, in the phenomenological content of the percipient's perception, of X--to the identity of X. (By the "data of our phenomenal field" I refer to the propositional content of the sets of propositional episodes comprising a perceptual experience. The "data" of sense perception, as I use this term, refers to the "content" of the perceptual [i.e. phenomenal] field and not of sensory fields.) Such inferences may be unconscious as well as occurring consciously. Unconscious

inferential recognitions of entities are most likely habitual recognitions and would probably be for the most part indistinguishable during our immediate experience from non-inferential recognitions. Habitual, unconsciously inferential recognitions are to be distinguished from non-inferential recognitions by the actual use, apparent I take it on careful reflection, of inferences in only the former case rather than by our immediate awareness of, or of the apparent lack of, such inferences from sense data to the identity of an entity. The use of inferences in habitual, unconscious, inferential recognitions is in principle discernable on careful reflection, and is often, I take it, apparent (although imperfect acts of remembering these recognitions may make it impossible to discern the use of inferences in many particular cases).

The notion in D_2 of "two predicates which denote classes of entities possessing contrary or contradictory ontological status" refers to pairings of categories of entities such as the physically real versus the physically unreal, the dreamt versus that which is not dreamt, the hallucinatory versus that which is not hallucinatory, the logically perceptible versus the imperceptible,[10] the logically knowable versus the unknowable, properties versus substances. This notion does not refer, e.g., to differing categories of objects each of whose

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[10]To borrow from an example which Gilbert Ryle offers as a "category mistake" in The Concept of Mind (New York, 1949), Ryle has provided a nice example of the difference in ontological status of logically perceptible and logically imperceptible entities, a difference which I will be discussing extensively below. Whereas it is possible to have sense perceptions of any man who is a taxpayer, the Average Taxpayer is imperceptible to the senses and it is a logical error to suppose that one could see, smell, etc., the Average Taxpayer.

members are subsumed under the same class because they have the same primary or secondary qualities. Also, notice that while on the Whorf hypothesis different languages reflect or embody different conceptual schemas, differences of conceptual schemas of types D_1 and D_2 may be embodied within the same language family in different language games within that language family.

With respect to the difference of conceptual schemas between users of mystic literalist and users of non-mystic-literalist western theistic religious language, there is a difference of schemas of type D_1 between these groups and that difference is founded on a more fundamental difference of type D_2.

III

Now consider, for instance, the tribe composed of chicken-sexers who can look closely at a young chick and reliably and non-inferentially determine the gender of the new-born chicken. (I am concerned here with the plausibility and logic of this example and not with whether real chicken-sexers actually perceive the gender of chicks in precisely the manner described.) If asked how he knows what a chick's gender is--i.e. what features of the chick act as perceptual "cues" for him when he determines the chick's gender--a member of this tribe of chicken-sexers will reply that he does not now know nor did he ever know.

Now, consider a tribe who are not chicken-sexers and who are unaware of the possibility of chicken-sexing. Members of this tribe can only determine a chick's gender inferentially. These non-chicken-sexers can determine a chicken's gender through the use of a rule dis-

joining sets of features which are sufficient for determining the gender of a chick. This rule would disjoin a disjunctive set of anatomical features determined by dissecting, x-raying, etc., the young chicken in question and a disjunctive set of biological functions of the chick. Finally, suppose that our non-chicken-sexers are not only unaware of the possibility of chicken-sexing but that they would consider the non-inferential recognition or perception of the gender of a chick through sense perception logically impossible. This non-inferential versus inferential determination of a chick's gender by these chicken-sexers and non-chicken-sexers respectively, where the non-chicken-sexers do not think that chicken-sexing is logically possible, is a paradigm case of type D_1 of a difference in conceptual schemas between two groups of percipients, or tribes.

This difference of conceptual schemas of type D_1 does not in itself constitute a variation of concepts between the two conceptual schemas, but it implies a variation of concepts. The reason why our chicken-sexers can non-inferentially determine a chick's gender while the non-chicken-sexers inferentially determine a chick's gender is that only for the former is the gender of the chick in itself a sense-perceptible entity. Non-chicken-sexers can inferentially know that a chick has a particular gender by perceiving certain anatomical or functional features of the chick, but seeing those features is not seeing the gender of the chick. Rather, seeing those features is seeing that a chick has a particular gender. Suppose members of our tribe of non-chicken-sexers, who do not think chicken-sexing is possible, wanted to be shown all the perceptible features of a chick. Having been shown a foot, feathers, tendons, a liver, and so on, it

would be a category mistake for them to say, "We have not yet seen the maleness, or femaleness, of this chick. You have not yet let us see that." Such a request is conceptually inconsistent within the language game of these non-chicken-sexers.

In contrast, such a request is not conceptually inconsistent among chicken-sexers. Presumably one good chicken-sexer could point out such features as tendons, feet, and feathers, to another good chicken-sexer and then, pointing to the chick as a whole, intelligibly say, "And don't you see the maleness (or femaleness) of this chick?" Thus, what is a non-sense-perceptible quality in the conceptual schema of non-chicken-sexers--viz. the gender of a chick--is a sense-perceptible quality for the tribe of chicken-sexers. Thus, these tribes of chicken-sexers and non-chicken-sexers also exhibit a difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2 since for the former the category denoted by "sense-perceptible entities" extends to the gender of particular chicks while the latter subsume this property of particular chicks under the contradictory category of entities which are necessarily sense-imperceptible.[11]

To further elucidate the more difficult notion of a difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2, consider Thomas Kuhn's descriptions in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions of differences in the way astronomers perceived the heavens before and after the changes wrought by the Copernican revolution in the accepted scientific paradigm:

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[11]This difference in the extensionality of the two tribes' notions of "sense perceptible" is reflected in the slight variation in the intention of their concept of the gender of a young chicken. In Chapter Five I discuss the affect such variations of intentionality have on the identity of the concepts of two percipients.

> Can it conceivably be an accident . . . that Western astronomers first saw change in the previously immutable heavens during the half-century after Copernicus' new paradigm was first proposed? The Chinese, whose cosmological beliefs did not preclude celestial change, had recorded the appearance of many new stars in the heavens at a much earlier date . . . [and] had systematically recorded the appearance of sunspots centuries before these were seen by Galileo and his contemporaries . . . [After Copernicus] late sixteenth-century astronomers repeatedly discovered that comets wandered at will through the space previously reserved for the immutable planets and stars.[12]

These differing perceptions between the pre- and post-Copernican (and Chinese) astronomers of the mutability of the heavens provides another paradigm of a difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2. Presuming that they had similar afferent processes of sense reception and given their similar sense stimuli, the pre-Copernicans which Kuhn refers to regarded the heavens as immutable while the post-Copernicans (and Chinese astronomers) which Kuhn refers to ascribed the contradictory ontological property of mutability to the heavens--a difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2.

Kuhn comments on the differing perceptions of the pre- versus the post-Copernicans and Chinese by saying that

> the very ease and rapidity with which astronomers saw new things when looking at old objects with old instruments may make us wish to say that, after Copernicus, astronomers lived in a different world.[13]

As we shall see in the next chapter, Kuhn is fundamentally correct in suggesting that the "worlds" of the pre- versus post-Copernicans and Chinese astronomers are different, yet care must be taken when talking about groups of percipients looking at the "same old objects." In

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[12]Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago, 1962), pp. 115-116.

[13]Ibid., p. 116.

analyzing differences of interpretation during acts of reflective consciousness of perception we can ask whether different percipients are interpreting the same data differently or interpreting different data. In the more fundamental cases of differing perceptions among different perceivers during acts of unreflective consciousness, there are two possible questions to be asked regarding these pre-interpretation experiences: (1) Is the immediately given sense data the same for both groups of perceivers, and (2) Are the states of the percipients' body and environment which are perceived by means of apprehending this sense data the same for both groups of percipients? As the jet liner flies over both an aborigine and a western man, the latter may see an airplane as part of the immediate phenomenological content of his perception, while the former may see a strange bird. The external physical object of which each perception is a perception will be, for the latter, an airplane, and may be for the aborigine simply an unidentifiable flying object (since the aborigine would, I guess, agree upon learning that he was viewing a human artifact that he had not seen a bird). Now, not only is the character of the immediate phenomenological content of perception determined by the percipient's conceptual schema, what his perceptions are perceptions of is also determined by his conceptual schema.

Thus while we may regard pre- and post-Copernicans as looking at the "same object," this merely means that relative to our conceptual schema the object of their perceptions is the same. Consider the fact that:

> On at least seventeen different occasions between 1690 and 1781, a number of astronomers, including several of Europe's most eminent observers, had seen a star in positions that

> we now suppose must have been occupied at the time by Uranus. [During these observations, the object in question was seen as a star or comet. Then Lexell suggested] . . . that the orbit was probably planetary. When that suggestion was accepted, there were several fewer stars and one more planet in the world of the professional astronomer. A celestial body that had been observed off and on for almost a century was seen differently after 1781.[14]

We would say that these two sets of astronomers are both looking at the planet Uranus (and we say this as percipients who believe in the existence of the planet Uranus) but the first group of astronomers who never came to accept the existence of the planet we call Uranus will have been perceiving a different object as the object of their perceptions--viz. a star. The only sense in which these two sets of astronomers are looking at the "same object" is that there is a "something" which they can both pick out by ostension--and agree that they disagree about "that."

Now it might seem that there must be a sure escape from the perceptual relativism which these last remarks imply. Kuhn considers the possibility of escape through an analysis of perception in terms of "some neutral-observation language, perhaps one designed to conform to the retinal imprints that mediate what the scientist sees." For he thinks that "only in one of these ways can we hope to retrieve a realm in which experience is again stable once and for all."[15] I think that the appeal to a pure-observation language is, as Kuhn suspects, fatuous.

Besides the mind's ordering of the immediate content of acts of reflective as well as of unreflective consciousness, a new aspect

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[14] Ibid., pp. 114-115.

[15] Ibid., p. 124.

of the structuring of experience can occur during reflective consciousness. The object of the reflective act, the unreflective act, may be analyzed by an interpretation of its content and this interpretation will itself be structured by our conceptual schemas. Concentrating on the ascension of a ridge in the Sierra Nevada, one might, in an act of unreflective consciousness, become suddenly aware of a furry mammal. Then, one might do either of two things. While still looking at the mammal, one might reflect on that present act of unreflective consciousness and become aware that one is conscious of a marmot--either by an immediate inferential act of recognition or by interpreting one's experience, because of a dispositional expectation to see marmots in the area, by inferring that the brown blur one indistinctly perceives is a marmot. On the other hand, one might later reflect on the remembered facts of what would then be a past act of unreflective consciousness and interpret that past experience as having been the perception of a marmot.[16] Regarding Kuhn's suggestion, any given observation language which is used to interpret what one perceives will be "neutral" only for those who participate in the appropriate language game of observation, thereby agreeing on the use of the primitive terms such as "retinal imprint." Again, only those percipients who possess the same conceptual schema subset of observation will thoroughly agree on (the interpretation of) what particular

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[16] In contrast, one might have simply seen the animal as a marmot by an immediate act of inferential recognition during the initial act of unreflective consciousness. These two cases (1) of immediate recognition--whether inferential or non-inferential and whether during acts of reflective or unreflective consciousness--and (2) of an interpretation of one's experience--whether as a reflective act during the occurrence of the experience or posterior to the experience--must be carefully kept distinct.

perceptions are perceptions of.

A cautionary note is needed here. From the foregoing remarks about differences of conceptual schemas it should not be concluded that two conceptual schemas could differ in every respect or, in other words, that every complete conceptual schema subset of one perceiver's conceptual schema might have no common conceptual structure with the corresponding complete conceptual schema subset of another perceiver. I think that it is probably true, though I will not attempt to argue for this, that given what we mean by rational there are certain elements which are common to the conceptual schemas of all rational beings. Kant might well have identified at least some of these common features of the conceptual schemas of rational beings in his discussion of those elements of our conceptual schemas which he felt were necessary to any experience.[17]

Also, it can be noted that the use (often unconscious) of rules in the inferential recognition of objects in ordinary sense perception is analogous to the use, discussed above, of rules of make-believe and vision rules in the perception of representational art and visions. All three types of rules are, when employed, part of the conceptual structure of the perceiver's conceptual schema. However,

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[17] On the Kantian account of elements of our conceptual schemas which are necessary for experience for us as rational beings, certain alleged mystical experiences could not have occurred and, hence, the experience in question must have been misinterpreted by the mystic. William Stace, in Mysticism and Philosophy, lists as one of the definitive characteristics of what he calls the "introvertive" mystical experience "being non-spatial and non-temporal" (p. 10). It could be part of the phenomenological content of a mystical experience that the mystic feels that the experience has no temporal or spatial properties but, on the Kantian view, the experience must in actuality have temporal and spatial properties: otherwise there would be no experience.

rules of make-believe are necessarily operative and used in all perceptions of the make-believe truths of representational art but, as was pointed out in Chapter Three, vision rules cannot be operative in the perception of certain visionary truths and, similarly, rules are not operative in many of our our ordinary sense perceptions since our recognition of sense-perceptible entities is frequently non-inferential.

IV

Non-mystic-literalist users of ordinary western religious discourse inferentially determine the presence of God (and angels). God is believed, in ordinary discourse, to be present because He is so identified by the prophets or on the basis of the character of acts which it is inferred that He is performing. If acts of, for example, a perfectly good character requiring an extraordinarily powerful agent are performed, then it might be inferred that God is their author. Any being whose existence is inferred from what are alleged to be his actions but who acts maliciously or exhibits a lack of power could not be God. Friedrich Schleiermacher, in The Christian Faith, even defines the locution "God" in terms of an inference from religious experience. For him, "God" denotes that being which must be inferred as the cause of the definitive religious experience, one's "feeling of absolute dependence." And, as we have already seen in Chapter Two, St. Augustine and St. Thomas argue that from visible manifestations of God the percipient can infer that God is present or that He has certain attributes.[18] St. Augustine suggests that an analogy for

[18]See pp. 58-60 and 64-65 above.

this inference to God's presence, character, or acts is the inferential relationship between hearing an utterance and, thereby, hearing (that) the utterer has certain thoughts, and St. Thomas models this inference to the presence, etc., of God on the inference from metaphorical truth to real truth. Thus, users of theological discourse, who think that a non-inferential perception of God Himself is impossible, infer the presence of God or that He has a certain character or is performing certain acts, by using (perhaps unconsciously) a rule disjoining sets of features which are regarded as strong evidence for these facts. This rule disjoins the occurrence of miraculous, good, and might acts, prophetic claims that God is present, a feeling of "absolute dependence," even visible manifestations of God, etc.

Now, there are three possible ways in which Mysticults could claim that their God-visions,[19] angel-visions, etc., are veridical. (i) There might be Mysticults who would claim that there are literal truths--such as that claimed by Teresa in Relation 40 of her Life where she says that in a vision she "saw how all things are seen in God"--which are entailed by visionary truths. But they would not claim that there are literal sense perceptions of God and angels which correspond to such visionary truths as, "I see God," "I was touched by an angel," etc. (ii) There might be Mysticults who would think that

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[19]Following the usage in Chapter Three, "Mysticult" denotes a member of the class of percipients of visions who claim to have visions in which they perceive visionary truths and "x-vision" denotes a vision of an entity the actual existence or characteristics or actions of which cannot be inferred from the occurrence of the vision, and the locution "vision of x" will be used to denote a vision of an entity which actually exists or the characteristics or actions of an entity which actually exists.

visionary sense perceptions of God and angels entail the possibility of correspondent actual sensory perceptions of God and angels. I.e. they would think that visionary truths entail literal truths about the existence of perceptible objects similar to the way in which photographic truths of ordinary, unretouched, non-trick photographs entail literal truths about the existence of sensible objects.[20] (iii) There might be Mysticults who would claim that visionary perceptions of God, angels, etc., simply are actual perceptions of these beings except that the former occur only in certain circumstances--e.g. when one meditates, when God or an angel chooses to make himself perceptible to the mystic, when the five spiritual senses are used, etc. Mysticults whose claims of the veridicality of their visions fall into categories (ii) and (iii) are mystic literalists.

Regarding the second possibility, some percipients of visions might have thought it appropriate to describe their visions as if they were something like a "realistic" or "life-like" photograph, or movie, of God or Christ or some angels, a characterization of at least imaginary visions implied by St. John of the Cross's description of imaginary visions as like

> a lightening flash, which, on a dark night, reveals things suddenly, and causes them to be clearly and distinctly seen, and then leaves them in darkness, although the forms and figures of them remain in the fancy . . . those things that the spirit has seen in that light remained impressed upon it in such a way that whensoever it observes them it sees them in itself as it saw them before; even as in a mirror the forms that are in it are seen whensoever a man looks in it.[21]

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[20]Though the sensible objects whose existence is entailed by the photograph may not be the sensible objects of which the viewer thinks the photograph is a photograph, particularly if the object photographed is small or at a great distance.

[21]St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Bk. II, Ch. 24:5.

There are make-believe rules of the sort operative in representational art which are operative in our perception of photographic truths (evidenced by the fact that people unfamiliar with photography will turn a black and white photograph over and over, trying to discern its use or significance). But besides the make-believe truths which we can perceive when looking at a "realistic" or "life-like" photograph, there must be correspondent literal truths which can also actually be perceived (as long as, e.g., the photograph "came out," is a close-up photograph of fairly large, normally perceptible objects, etc.).

To say that a particular photograph is a good realistic or life-like photograph <u>of</u> some object is to say that there actually exists or existed a perceptible object depicted by the photograph (though it may not actually have precisely those properties which the photograph depicts it as possessing). Statements like, "I see Cousin Mortimer's smiling face," uttered by knowing participants in the game of make-believe operative in the perception of the make-believe truths in a life-like photograph they are inspecting, entail a commitment to the actual existence of some perceptible object other than the photograph itself--viz. in this instance Cousin Mortimer's face. Thus, insofar as the percipients of visions of God and angels, who knowingly participate in the game of vision rules of the visions which they perceive, would think it appropriate to regard their visions as like "realistic" or "life-like" photographs, the acceptance of the visionary truths of their visions entails a commitment to the actual existence of the proper sense-perceptible forms of God and angels.

Also, imaginary God-visions and angel-visions in which vision

rules are not operative, which are believed to be genuine, and in which God, angels, and other entities are not thought to be literally sensibly perceived through their proper sense-perceptible forms represented by means of the "images" of the vision, should be regarded as veridical in manner (ii). For, as was argued at the end of Chapter Two, to "perceive" God or angels or other entities by means of mental images entails that some imagined physical form and some imagined sense qualities are "perceived" as spatially located and from a point of view. This in turn entails that God or the angels, etc., could be literally perceived from a point of view, and as spatially located, by means of a similar physical form and similar sense qualities.

Now, consider mystic literalists who do not infer the presence of God and angels during their visions through the use of disjunctive rules. Of these mystic literalists, those who claim that their God-visions and angel-visions are veridical in manner (iii) and who would profess that they perceive God and angels by means of sense qualities or the proper sense-perceptible forms of these beings, have a conceptual schema which differs in manner D_1 from that of the user of ordinary religious discourse. (To my mind, since rules are not operative in instances of non-inferential sense perception, I do not think that rules are involved in non-inferential recognitions of type (iii) in the sensory perception of God, angels, etc., and their properties, but I will not attempt to settle that issue here.) That is, mystic literalists whose visions are subsumable under category (iii) have a different conceptual schema from users of theological discourse if they non-inferentially actually recognize or perceive God and angels.[22]

[22]Visions frequently occur during the four successive stages

Whereas non-chicken-sexers conclude what the gender of a particular chick is on the basis of a disjunctive set of biological and functional characteristics of that chick, a member of the tribe of chicken-sexers non-inferentially perceives the gender of a particular young chicken. In a similar manner, these mystic literalists non-inferentially perceive God and angels while the users of ordinary theological discourse conclude that these beings are present, etc., on the basis of the occurrence of, e.g., miraculous, good, and mighty acts. In actually perceiving God or an angel, it might simply be part of the phenomenological content of the visionary experience of Mysticults whose visions fit category (iii) that it is God whom they perceive. This does not, of course, obviate the possibility that the features of the being which is actually perceived act as "cues" to the recognition of that being as God just as the features of chicks may act as perceptual "cues" for the chicken-sexer's non-inferential recognition of a chick's gender.

It might be objected here, though, that mystic literalists whose visions are veridical in manner (iii) and users of non-mystic

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of the Christian Unitive Life; they are especially pervasive during ecstasy. Thus, in the following discussion of God's felt presence during these four stages, Poulain agrees by implication that during the visions occurring in the course of these four stages, God (and this would apply by extension to angels) is often non-inferentially recognized:

> By way of [ordinary experience of the divine love], you know only one thing--that your soul is inflamed by love. By a rapid deduction you then say to yourself that God alone could be the author of such a state, and by a second argument you conclude that He is present. But . . . [during the four stages of the Unitive Life] the soul proceeds quite otherwise. She has an experimental knowledge, analogous to that of the senses which do not reason; the soul then perceives; she does not conclude. (Poulain, Graces, p. 67)

literalist religious discourse do not have a difference of conceptual schemas of type D_1 since they do not experience the same sense stimuli: the non-mystic has no (apparent) sense perceptions in which he perceives God Himself or an angel itself. However, the clause "given similar sense stimuli" which is a necessary precondition for the applicability of this notion of a difference of conceptual schemas must be understood as hypothetical. That is, if non-mystic-literalists were to receive the same sense stimuli as mystic literalists who have (apparent) sense perceptions in which they perceive God Himself or an angel itself, such initial experiences could only be classified by non-mystic-literalists as hallucinatory under their a priori conceptual schema. Such apparent sense experiences of God might not, of course, be experienced at the moment of their inception as hallucinatory. They might appear to be veridical experiences at the moment of their occurrence just as more ordinary hallucinations commonly appear at first to the perceiver to be experiences of real, perceptible objects at the time of the occurrence. But thoughtful reflection would lead the non-mystic-literalist, as long as his conceptual schema remains unaltered, to categorize his experiences, like the fantasies of the inebriated, as hallucinatory.[23]

Hence, for the user of non-mystic-literalist religious discourse, all apparent instances of his non-inferential sense perceptual recognition of the presence of God or angels--i.e. purported mystical

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[23]Of course after initial (apparent) sense perceptions of God and angels, the conceptual schema of the non-mystic-literalist might become altered such that he would then categorize these experiences as literal sense perceptions. The possibility and rational conditions of such alterations of conceptual schemas is discussed in Chapter Six.

experiences involving sense perceptions of these divine beings--will not even count as veridical perceptions, whether inferential or not, of the presence of God or angels. Purported actual sense perceptions of God or angels will, for the user of non-mystic western religious discourse, be treated, and are treated, like supposedly actual sense perceptions of Pegasus.

Mystic literalists whose visions would be classified under category (ii) might have received corporeal visions in which they non-inferentially perceive the presence of God or of an angel. Or they might experience either received or perceived imaginary visions during which they perceive, inferentially or non-inferentially, the presence of God or of an angel. In either case, the visionary truths about those visionary sense perceptions entail possible actual sensory perceptions by means of which God or an angel is non-inferentially recognizable. Again, this subset of mystic literalists whose visions are veridical in manner (ii) will have a difference of conceptual schemas of type D_1 from that of users of ordinary western religious discourse.

Moreover, by analogical reasoning with the tribes of chicken-sexers and non-chicken-sexers and the perceptions of the heavens of the pre- and post-Copernican astronomers, we can make sense out of the claims of mystic literalists. We can make sense out of their claims to literally see, be touched by, etc., God and angels in virtue of the proper sense-perceptible form of these beings or by means of perceptions of sense qualities (or, in the case of mystic literalists whose visions are of type [ii], claims that the truths of their visions entail that God is actually perceptible, by means of sense qualities or of a proper sense-perceptible form, to the external

senses).

Chicken-sexers can non-inferentially see young chickens as male or as female, and can thus perceive instances of properties which are in themselves imperceptible to non-chicken-sexers; the post-Copernican (and Chinese) astronomers whom Kuhn alludes to perceived changes in the heavens while their pre-Copernican counterparts saw an immutable heaven (saw the heavens as immutable). In non-mystic-literalist western religious discourse, to say that one, e.g., "sees God," is to say that one infers the presence of God from what are taken to be actions which, it is inferred, He is performing--for example, parting the waters of the Red Sea or producing the feeling of absolute dependence. This is like the non-chicken-sexer's claim that he can "see the gender of this chick" when he discovers, by dissection, x-raying, etc., that the chick in question possesses a particular anatomical feature. Parallelling the chicken-sexers, mystic literalists may non-inferentially perceive the presence of God and angels--either when the perceptible features of the proper sense-perceptible forms of these celestial beings act as cues for the mystic literalists' recognition or apart from any features which act as perceptual cues. The reason that mystic literalists, unlike non-mystic-literalists, can non-inferentially perceive the presence of God or angels is that for them--that is, it is a part of the logic of their language game of perception that--God and angels are themselves sense perceptible. And, parallelling the post-Copernican and Chinese astronomers versus the pre-Copernican astronomers suggested by Kuhn, who regarded the heavens as, respectively, mutable and immutable, mystic literalists and users of ordinary religious discourse have a

difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2.

As we saw in Chapter Two, theologians such as Augustine and Aquinas who represent the orthodox ordinary religious discourse hold that it is logically impossible that God and angels have proper sense-perceptible forms, and that it is logically impossible that God Himself and angels themselves be perceived non-inferentially (whether perceived mediately or immediately) by means of sense perceptions. Mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists have a difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2 because, while agreeing about all the other attributes of these beings, they subsume God and angels under one set of ontologically contradictory categories: sense perceptibility and sense imperceptibility. Thus, a difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2 is the basis of the difference of schemas of type D_1 between users of mystic literalist and non-mystic-literalist religious discourse.[24]

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[24]It is worth noting another interesting (though rather dissimilar) difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2 between users of ordinary western religious discourse and those who participate in the language games of mystic literalist religious discourse regarding the possibility of sensibly perceiving angels. Taking them for the moment as representatives of users of ordinary western religious discourse, the position of those more recent Biblical scholars who subscribe to the Bultmannian notion of "de-mythologizing" the New Testament can be summarized in Bultmann's following exposition of this position. He says that it is "impossible" for modern man to accept the "mythical" view of the world (including, e.g., angelic visitations):

> because no man can adopt a view of the world by his own volition . . . of course such a view is not absolutely unalterable, and the individual may even contribute to its change. But he can do so only when he is faced by a set of facts so compelling as to make his previous view of the world untenable. . . . now that the forces and the laws of nature have been discovered, we can no longer believe in spirits, whether good or evil. (Rudolph Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in Kerygma and Myth, ed. Hans

V

Given this difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2 between mystic literalists and users of non-mystic-literalist western religious discourse, it is evident that the following remark, representative of the non-mystic-literalist position, of Evelyn Underhill's, against the intelligibility of mystic literalist claims of actual sense perceptions of God and angels is as much misdirected as erroneous:

> Materialistic piety . . . would have us believe that St. Anthony of Padua really held the Infant Christ in his arms, and that the Holy Ghost truely told the Blessed Angela of Foligno that He loved her better than any other woman in the Vale of Spoleto . . . [Materialistic piety] turns dreams into miracles and drags down the symbolic visions of genius to the level of pious hallucination.[25]

Like other users of the theological religious discourse, such as Thomas and Maimonides who refer to visions as, respectively, "metaphorical" and "allegorical," Underhill thinks that the apparent sense perceptions involved in visions (and "locutions") are not literally sense perceptions of God and angels but only symbolically representative of religious truths.

This interpretation of visions contrasts sharply with the prima facie literalness of the sense perceptions of God and angels

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Werner Bartsch [New York, 1961], pp. 3-4)
Bultmann has a conceptual schema which differs in manner D_2 from that of mystic literalists in that he categorizes angels as non-existent while they subsume these beings under the category of the actually existent. This difference of conceptual schemas in turn entails a difference of type D_2 of the sort that generally holds between users of mystic literalist and users of non-mystic-literalist religious discourse since while angels are sense-perceptible beings for the former, Bultmannians obviously regard angels, being non-existent, as sense imperceptible.

[25] Underhill, Mysticism, p. 267 (italics mine).

occurring during visions and contradicts many mystics' own interpretation--whether explicit or implied by their reactions--of these putative sense perceptions. Mystic literalist statements indicating the literal sense perception of God and angels during visions are too frequent and too bold to be facilely dismissed. Furthermore, I agree with Anton Poulain's general assessment of the extent to which the mystic literalist's own construal of the sense perceptions of personages occurring during visions should be accepted. Although Poulain does not extend his remarks to cover sense perceptions of God and angels, I think that considerations of consistency would argue that such perceptual claims be treated in an equal manner when Poulain says:

> [The] doctrine of a personal action is held by all the saints who have seen corporeal apparitions. They have never imagined that they had before them, or that they held in their arms, a mere statue, only differing from others by the perfection of colour or movement. This is evident from their accounts of what had passed and from their actions. For example: St. Anthony of Padua covered the Infant Jesus with kisses. It was certainly a question of a corporeal apparition, for he touched the Holy Child, and the scene was witnessed by the owner of the house where the saint lodged. St. Peter, at the gate of Rome, threw himself at the feet of the apparition . . . saying . . . 'Lord, whither goest thou?' This phrase would have no meaning if he had thought that he was speaking to a mere image.[26]

A recognition that there is a difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2 between mystic literalists and users of ordinary or theological western religious language makes it evident that assertions like Underhill's that the mystic literalist position is simply wrong miss the significance of the linguistic oddness of mystic literalist claims within the language game(s) of ordinary religious discourse. State-

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[26]Poulain, Graces, p. 316.

ments like Underhill's are defective because simplistic. It is not simply the case that either the mystic literalists are correct or that the users of ordinary religious discourse are correct in their claims. Their disagreement is a logical, not a factual, matter.

The (apparent) contradiction between the mystic literalist claims of sense perceptions of God and angels and the assertions of users of ordinary western religious discourse that there are no instances in which God and angels are sense perceptible, either by means of the perception of sense qualities or the perception of the proper sense-perceptible forms of these beings, is precisely what should be expected if they have differences of types D_1 and D_2 between their conceptual schemas. Chicken-sexers and non-chicken-sexers think that the gender of a young chicken is, respectively, a sense-perceptible and a sense-imperceptible quality. While the former can directly and non-inferentially perceive the gender of a chick the latter cannot. Certain pre- and post-Copernicans thought, respectively, that the heavens are immutable and mutable and whereas the former did not perceive change in the heavens, the latter did. Mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists think--that is, it is part of the logic of their conceptual schemas of perception--respectively, that God and angels are sense perceptible and sense imperceptible beings and the former but not the latter believe (and have experiences which accord with those beliefs) that there are instances of literal sense perceptions of these celestial beings. The contradiction between the conceptual structures of the conceptual schemas of the members of each of these pairings of percipients results in contradictory sets of perceptions between each of the sets of members in each pairing. An

experience which one member of the pair of percipients regards as a veridical perception the other member regards as hallucinatory. This is reflected in the contradictions between their language game(s) of perception--which is why mystic literalist claims are linguistically odd within the language game(s) of ordinary religious discourse--and is entailed by their differences of conceptual schemas of type D_2.

Thus, unless a critic, like Underhill, of the mystic literalist position advances a persuasive[27] argument against the adoption of the conceptual schema of the mystic literalist, no more can be claimed than this: from the point of view of the conceptual schema of the user of non-mystic-literalist religious discourse, mystic literalists are mistaken to suppose that God and angels are literally perceived by means of sense qualities or a proper sense-perceptible form of these beings. Or rather, since we always speak from within a conceptual schema, flatly to claim, apart from any argument against the adoption of their conceptual schema, that the mystic literalist position is erroneous is, like all assertions of truth and falsity, to speak in accordance with the conceptual structure of a particular--in this case the non-mystic-literalist--conceptual schema.

A difference of conceptual schemas of types D_1 and D_2 explains why mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists each say what they do about particular putative sense perceptions of God and angels, but which group of percipients is correct? And if correct, in what sense

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[27] An argument of this sort could not, as we will see, be conclusive for anyone who holds or is strongly inclined to adopt (the relevant conceptual schema subsets of) the conceptual schema of the mystic literalist.

is either group correct? Mysticult claims to have apparent sense perceptions of God and angels in those visions in which vision rules are operative appeared prima facie linguistically odd within the language game of users of theological religious discourse. In Chapter Two we saw that these claims were not in fact linguistically odd. However, the claims of mystic literalists to literally have sense perceptions of God and angels certainly seem to be more than simply linguistically odd within the language game of the user of ordinary or theological religious discourse. There is an apparent contradiction between the mystic literalist and non-mystic-literalist positions in western religious discourse: surely, it would seem, both positions cannot be correct.

SIX

DIFFERENCES OF CONCEPTUAL SCHEMAS --AND CONTRADICTIONS

In the language game of perception of the non-mystic-literalists, God and angels are necessarily sense imperceptible; in the mystic literalist's language game of perception, it is possible to have sense perceptions of God and angels. Clearly, there is a modal operator in each of these claims. Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Thomas, for example, would, I take it, say that there is no possible universe in which God or angels are sense perceptible, either by means of sense qualities or proper sense-perceptible forms for these beings, while mystic literalists hold that there is at least some possible universe--namely the actual universe--in which God and angels are sense perceptible and are actually sensibly perceived.

From the considerations of the last chapter we know <u>why</u> each group of percipients asserts the position which it does: they possess different conceptual schemas, schemas which differ in manner D_1 and, more significantly here, D_2. However, their claims are prima facie mutually inconsistent. And even if not mutually contradictory, if either position is intelligible, is the other nonsensical? In analyzing this prima facie mutual inconsistency between the mystic literalist and non-mystic-literalist positions, I will attempt to answer two questions: (1) What is the status of the necessity operator

involved in the contention that God and angels are necessarily sense imperceptible (or, conversely, the possibility operator in the claim that it is possible to perceive God and angels by means of sense perceptions), and (2) What sort of contradiction, if any, arises between the mystic literalist's (perhaps often implicit) claims that God and angels are sense perceptible and the position of the users of ordinary western religious discourse who hold that these beings are necessarily imperceptible by means of sense perceptions.

The answer to what sort of contradiction arises between the apparently contradictory claims of percipients possessing differences of conceptual schemas which order their perceptions in an (apparently) mutually incompatible or mutually inconsistent manner will also help answer two other questions. These are the two principal questions which yet remain unanswered from the previous chapters. We have seen why in their visions mystics tend to perceive entities which accord with their expectations. But is it not the case that they cannot all be true? For, two mystics can perceive the same external phenomenon as two different things and, while perceiving different phenomena, the ontological facts supported by different mystics' perceptions (apparently) would be contradictory? Secondly, how can the features of a vision be perceived yet ineffable?

I

The status of the modal operators of necessity and possibility involved in the apparently mutually contradictory statements in the language games of perception of mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists, and hence the sort of contradiction, if any, which the

two sets of assertions conjointly entail, will be more readily apparent after an analysis of the circumstances under which proponents of each of these positions would come to discard their own and agree with their opponents' point of view.

Consider the following suggestion of C. I. Lewis's:

> Spirits cannot be photographed. But if photographs of spiritistic phenomena, taken under properly guarded conditions, should become sufficiently frequent, this a priori distinction would be called in question. What we should do would be to redefine our terms.[1]

Here Lewis envisions the possibility of a change in a person's conceptual schema (though this is not what he calls it). He thinks that it is now a necessary truth of our ordinary conceptual schema that spirits cannot be photographed. Yet, if we were consistently to achieve what we would, were the object a commonly-photographed entity, call a photograph of spirits, we would, he thinks, change our concepts in order to allow for the (what would thereby be considered actual) photographic qualities of spirits.

Thus, given our present conceptual schema, within our ordinary language game concerning photographability it is necessarily false that a spirit could be photographed. Any photograph which purports to be a photograph of a spirit will necessarily be classified as bogus, or else the object of such a photograph would neceessarily be classified as a non-spiritistic physical phenomenon: "That's not a photograph of a spirit; you've merely recorded the presence in the room of some unusual radiation which is completely explainable in terms of natural causes." However, in the face of persistent phenomena recal-

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[1]Lewis, Mind and the World Order, p. 263.

citrant to that conceptualization, we might change our conceptual schema such that under the new rules of the then correspondent language game of photographability it would not be contradictory to talk about photographs of spirits--and, presumably, it would therefore not be contradictory to talk about seeing spirits.[2] I will refer to changes of conceptual schemas such that the logical structure of the new schema contradicts that of the old as "alterations of conceptual schemas."

Other examples of alterations in conceptual schemas producing changes in perceptions are the two changes in the perceptions of the astronomers which Kuhn discusses in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Kuhn points out that "western astronomers first saw change in the previously immutable heavens during the half-century after Copernicus' new paradigm was first proposed"[3] and he notes the change in western astronomers' perceptions of the entity we now call Uranus once Lexell suggested that it was probably a planet and not, as previously thought, a star or a comet.[4] Here again, because of repeated experiences difficult to conceptualize using the rules of their old language games, these percipients alter their conceptual schemas. Because of these alterations, for one group of percipients

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[2]If, as we shall see Lewis thinks, the concept of "spirit" changed completely (it did not) under the new conceptual schema, then it would no longer be spirits in the old sense which are now photographable. But Lewis's discussion presupposes that the same entities, spirits, are referred to both before and after the change in their photographability. This issue will be returned to below.

[3]Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, p. 115.

[4]Ibid., p. 114. Kuhn discusses other "paradigm-induced [conceptual schema induced] changes in scientific perceptions" involving chemistry, electricity, and physics on pages 116-118.

the heavens became classified as mutable (they changed to a conceptual schema subset which made their conceptual schema differ from their initial schema in manner D_2), and for the others their perceptions of Uranus became conceptualized as those of a planet and not a star or comet. Both groups of percipients are then using the rules of new language games that conflict with and even contradict the rules of their former language games.

In the mystical literature there are also examples of alterations of conceptual schemas, some of which involve a change of a group of percipients' conceptual schemas from that of the user of ordinary religious discourse to that of the mystic literalist.[5] I have already commented on what is apparently an alteration of conceptual schemas for a group of percipients--though it is not clear that any single percipient altered his conceptual schema. This alteration, which is important if purported sense perceptions of angels occur while it is held that God is sense imperceptible, is the difference in Judeo-Christian religious figures' perceptions of celestial beings before angels are believed to be beings independently existent from God and after this change in belief.

When the apprehension of an angel is identified with the apprehension of God, the percipient frequently says, or is represented

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[5] A general example of an alteration of conceptual schemas for a single percipient might be Peter's reluctance, noted in the introduction to this essay, to accept the actual presence of the angel that visited him in prison even after the angel spoke to him and removed the shackles binding him (Acts 12:6-9). An alteration of conceptual schemas would explain this initial resistance of religious figures to the possible literalness of their earlier mystical experiences involving the sense perceptions of celestial beings where there is a subsequent acceptance of those experiences as actual.

as saying, that he first sees an angel or angels, then talks about the same experience as a perception of God (or vice versa).[6] Later, epiphanies are explicitly reported as either epiphanies of angels, or of God, or simultaneously of both, but as distinct beings. It seems quite possible to me, though impossible to determine one way or the other, that very similar sense stimuli are in the first instance conceptualized phenomenologically as a perception of God and in the second instance as a perception of an angel, where an angel for the second set of perceivers is, unlike that for the first set of perceivers, a being whose existence is distinct from God's.

Taking the conjunction of these two sets of perceivers, there is a change of perception within the larger set of percipients, that is, within the set of percipients who are users of the Judeo-Christian discourse. Martin Buber says regarding a slightly different alteration of conceptual schemas among the large, temporally extended group of early Jewish percipients, that

> no prophet had anything to tell of a figure resembling the human until Ezekiel, who was affected by theological speculation . . .[7]

Buber is concerned to argue against a literal construal of purported sense perceptions of God and takes it that the influence of Ezekiel's theological speculation on his perceptions militates against God's actually having a proper sense-perceptible form. Yet Judeo-Christian percipients before and after either (i) the acceptance of the idea that angels are beings distinct from God or (ii) the belief that God

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[6]See Genesis 18.

[7]Buber, Moses, p. 117.

might have a proper sense-perceptible form[8] exhibit exactly the sort of change in their perceptions, or in their reports of the visions of others, that this alteration in their conceptual schema would produce. Given apparently similar sense stimuli, they report perceptions of (i) angels instead of, as formerly, God, and of (ii) the form of God in place of, as formerly, physical phenomena which merely indicate God's presence. Here, in contrast to some of the cases already considered, it is not so much repeated experiences difficult to categorize under the old conceptual schema, as simply a change in that conceptual schema itself (a change in, e.g., "theological speculation"), which results in the differing perceptions.

Drawing together these considerations about differing perceptions for the same percipient, or for a group of percipients, at different times, we will now be able to see (1) how the oddness of such changes in perception is elucidated and then dispelled in terms of an alteration of conceptual schema(s) and (2) what are rational as well as usual grounds for the alteration of one's conceptual schema.

In the foregoing examples of differing perceptions, what is either axiomatic or simply true within one conceptual schema is either trivially logically incoherent or patently false within its opposite

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[8] In this regard recall Ezekiel's alleged perception of:

> "the likeness as it were of a human form. And upward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were gleaming bronze . . . " (Ezekiel 1:26-28)

and Jeremiah says that, during his theophany recorded in Jer. 1:9, God "put forth his hand and touched my mouth." This Jewish mystical tradition of seeing the (human-like) form of God is perhaps most strikingly represented in the mystical tract, Shiur Komah, or "The Measure of the Body [of God]," which gives stupendous measurements for the human-like parts of the body of the Creator. (See Scholem, Jewish Mysticism, pp. 63 f.)

in each pairing of conceptual schemas. Yet as these examples illustrate, alterations of conceptual schemas frequently occur and are unexceptional even as linguistically odd as it is within the logical structure of his former conceptual schema for a percipient to claim to e.g. perceive change in the (formerly immutable) heavens or perceive an orbit around the sun for (formerly the star) Uranus or, returning to the central concern of this essay, to perceive by means of sense perceptions (the formerly sense-imperceptible beings) God and angels.

Alterations of conceptual schemas may be gradual and even temporally extended over successive percipients using many of the same language games. Yet alterations among mystic literalists of their conceptual schemas from what was initially the conceptual schema of the user of ordinary western religious discourse are no more abrupt or unusual than certain common alterations of conceptual schemas among more familiar percipients. For example, Kuhn suggests that changes of (what I call) conceptual schemas in the scientific community occur as a

> relatively sudden and unstructured event like a gesalt switch. Scientists then often speak of the 'scales falling from the eyes' or of the 'lightening flash' that 'inundates' a previously obscure puzzle, enabling its components to be seen in a new way that for the first time permits its solution. On other occasions the relevant illumination comes in sleep.[9]

Such alterations of conceptual schemas are no more sudden than the rapid changes of conceptual schemas which occur when, say, a budding ornithologist first recognizes and achieves a permanent ability to re-recognize a new bird species of whose diagnostic characteristics

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[9]Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, pp. 121-122.

he has read, and they are just as odd as alterations of conceptual schemas of those who become mystic literalists through their initial unanticipated sense perceptions of God and angels.

There are of course restrictions on what constitutes a likely or rational alteration of conceptual schema(s). Normally, as in most of the examples cited above, alterations of conceptual schemas occur because of repeated experiences which are not satisfactorily conceptualizable under one's present conceptual schema. That is, a crisis with one's present conceptual schema is ordinarily a precondition of an alteration of conceptual schema but, ordinarily, single anomalous experiences are unlikely to cause a conceptual schema alteration. Usually conceptual schemas are altered because, in the face of repeated experiences recalcitrant to conceptualization, it is pragmatically expedient to change one's schema. But pragmatic considerations also argue for the relegation of isolated, even if disturbingly anomalous, experiences to the categories of epistemic dubitability--e.g. hallucination or illusion--rather than arguing for a comparatively drastic revision of the conceptual structure of one's coneptual schema. Considerations of conservation and the desire for certainty also support this.

These last remarks touch on the rational grounds for alterations of one's conceptual schema, which I will indicate but not list exhaustively.[10] The general meta-property of rational grounds for

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[10]Even though we always interpret and assess from within a particular conceptual schema no infinite regress of conceptual schemas is generated by attempts to assess the rationality of a particular alteration of conceptual schemas. In such an assessment of the totality of the new conceptual schema, it must be recognized that one preserves and continues to speak from within some conceptual

alterations of conceptual schemas is pragmatic expediency: changes of conceptual schema will not be rational if they are arbitrary and the non-arbitrary is delimited by what "works," i.e. is epistemologically efficacious, in experience and action.[11] Since, as we saw in the last chapter, there is a brute-fact element in perceptual experience, the conceptual structure of a percipient's conceptual schema could not, if it is to be epistemologically efficacious, be utterly arbitrary. Now, one's conceptual schema determines in part what phenomenological contents of perception will have this brute-fact aspect. The "output" of the physiological sense-reception processes does not alone determine this bruteness. For the case of the aborigine and the western man looking at an airplane shows that exact similarity of sense stimuli and of sense-reception processes does not guarantee sameness of the bruteness of perception and the case of percipients who become used to inverting lenses so that they see things

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schema subset concerning rationality, a conceptual schema subset which must be carried over from the initial to the final conceptual schema. More will be said about this in Section III below.

[11]This is why we properly find it ludicrous, as Carroll intended us to, for the White Queen to suggest in Through the Looking Glass that if she only tries hard enough, she can come to believe as many as six impossibilities before breakfast.

Quine, even as he recognizes pragmatic expediency as a ground for the alteration of conceptual schemas, in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," (in Quine, From a Logical Point of View, p. 45), does not, I think, accord it sufficient weight in those alterations. He says that "the edge of the system [of the conceptual "scheme" of total science] must be kept squared with experience; the rest, with all its elaborate myths or fictions, has as its objective the simplicity of laws." I feel that Quine misses the point both that what will count as experience as well as what kind of experience it will count as is circumscribed by the conceptual structure of the percipient's conceptual schema and that every feature of one's conceptual schema is subject to change in view of experience. We strive, for example, for simplicity of law insofar as it least conflicts with past experience and is expectably pragmatically expedient for projected future experience.

"right side up" shows that a (radical) difference of sense stimuli does not guarantee a correspondent difference of the brute-facts of perception. However, even though one's conceptual schema determines in part what phenomenological contents of perception will have this brute-fact aspect, this categorization is neither capricious nor erratic. The "output" of the physiological sense-reception processes partially determines this bruteness and the referent of this bruteness in perceptual experience is states of affairs which the percipient categorizes upon careful consideration as actual. What is categorized as actual is a function of what enables one to "get around in the world" since it is a function of the "output" of the physiological processes of sense reception, what past experience has led one to categorize as actual, and what the users of one's shared language games categorize as actual. The success of perception has a personal as well as a social aspect. If we arbitrarily altered our conceptual schemas we would fly in the face of the mind-ordered bruteness of past experience--severing ourselves both from past success in information gathering about our bodies and environment and from the possibility of mutually beneficial agreement with other percipients about states of affairs of our bodies and environments.

Two other principles of rationality that act as checks on the alteration of conceptual schemas have already been noted: a tendency to conserve already acquired conceptual structures of one's conceptual schema--recognizable as the platitudinous "learning from experience"--and the quest for, at least practical, certainty which prevents irrational belief in the merely novel over the evidentially grounded. Finally self consistency, together with a maximum (but seldom total)

comprehensiveness of the "facts" and solution of the most significant problems and, perhaps, considerations of parsimony, are clearly essential to a rational alteration of conceptual schemas.

II

It is evident that it is not causal necessity which is involved in either the claim of the non-mystic-literalist that God and angels are necessarily sense imperceptible or the pre-Copernicans' idea that the heavens are necessarily immutable or our notion that spirits are necessarily not photographable. We do not, I take it, simply think that in virtue of the currently operative causal laws of nature it is causally impossible for us to photograph spirits. Nor is Lewis suggesting that the causal laws of nature might some day change sufficiently to make it causally possible that we photograph spirits (he uses the unphotographability of spirits as an example of an "a priori criterion of the real"). The pre-Copernicans whom Kuhn refers to did not, I take it, think that if the operative causal laws were sufficiently altered then change could occur in the heavens. Non-mystic-literalists are not suggesting that if God were to change the operative causal laws, He would become sense perceptible to humans. Rather, they hold that, logically prior to any causal necessity arising from any possible consistent set of causal laws which God might have instantiated, it is a necessary truth about the nature of God that it is impossible that one perceive God Himself by means of sense perceptions.

It is an a priori truth of the conceptual schema of current users of our ordinary language game of photographability, of the pre-

Copernican western astronomers, and of non-mystic-literalists, that no matter what sorts of experiences one might have, no experience could count, respectively, as a photograph of a spirit, a perception of change in the heavens, or a sense perception of God or an angel. Changes in the actual causal laws of nature would only, if anything, result in changes in the "output" of our physiological afferent sense-reception processes. Even if this were in turn to help effect changes in the given element of the phenomenological content of experience, changes in the actual causal laws alone could not affect the conceptualizations of the above sense experiences. Such changes could not alter these conceptualizations to (actual because of their bruteness) real photographs of spirits, (actual because of their bruteness) real perceptions of heavenly change, (actual because of their bruteness) real sense perceptions of God or angels, instead of their classification as bogus photographs of spirits, illusions of heavenly change, and hallucinations of God and angels. The logical structure of our conceptual schemas determines the criteria of reality for different categories of the real--e.g. what count as being real dream entities, real hallucinatory entities, real visionary entities, as well as real physical entities. As C. I. Lewis points out:

> If experience were other than it is, the definition and its corresponding classification might be inconvenient, useless, or fantastic, but it could not be false. Mind makes classifications and determines meanings; in so doing, it creates that truth without which there could be no other truth.[12]

When mystic literalists claim or imply by their actions that it is possible to have sense perceptions of God and angels by means

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[12]Lewis, Mind and the World Order, p. 240.

of sense qualities or the proper sense-perceptible form of these beings, or when the post-Copernican astronomers said that they perceived change in the heavens, they do not mean, respectively, simply to deny that it is causally impossible to perceive God and angels--though of course, actual sense perceptions of God and angels entail the weaker claim that it is causally possible to have sense perceptions of God and angels. Nor do they mean simply to deny that the operative causal laws make the heavens causally immutable. Users of the mystic literalist language game of perception would also want to deny the stronger claim that it is a logically necessary truth that God is sense imperceptible (and to deny that it is an essential property of God's nature that He is sense imperceptible) and obviously the post-Copernicans would want to deny that the heavens are logically immutable.

Could logical necessity be the modal operator in the claims of the current users of our ordinary language game of photographability that spirits are unphotographable, of the western pre-Copernican astronomers that the heavens are immutable, and of the non-mystic-literalists that God and angels are, whether by means of sense qualities or a proper sense-perceptible form, sense imperceptible? Well, in the first case it is, ex hypothesi, conceivable that what is now a necessary truth--viz. that spirits cannot be photographed--may in the future be false; in the second case we now think that the heavens are mutable; in the last case mystic literalists at least purport to have sense perceptions of God and angels.

Moreover, regarding the last case, St. Augustine, in attempt-

ing in The City of God[13] to explain the beatific vision and the notion that the saints will see God "face to face" in heaven, offers a puzzling account of the possibility of sense perceptions of God which seems to preclude the possibility that God's (and angels') sense imperceptibility is inescapably logically necessary. Augustine, after carefully explaining that it is admitted that God shall be seen with the spiritual senses ("eyes of the heart") and that he is not answering the question of whether Christ will be seen in His body, addresses himself to the question whether, during the beatific vision, the saints having bodily eyes which "shall have their office and their place," shall "when their eyes are open . . . see [God, qua the Father or Holy Spirit] with the bodily eye?"

He first observes that if this question is answered in the affirmative:

> The eye, then, shall have a vastly superior power--the power not of keen sight, such as is ascribed to serpents or eagles, for however keenly these animals see they can discern nothing but bodily substances, but the power of seeing things incorporeal. Possibly it was this great power of vision which was temporarily communicated to the [bodily] eyes of Job while yet in this body . . .

He then argues that:

> If that reasoning of the philosophers, by which the attempt to make out that intelligible or mental objects are so seen by the mind, and sensible or bodily objects so seen by the body, that the former cannot be discerned by the mind through the body, nor the latter by the mind itself without the body --if this reasoning were trustworthy, then it would certainly follow that God could not be seen by the [bodily] eye . . .

But, Augustine reasons, the incorporeal being, God, has knowledge of sensible objects and Elisha knew spiritual things apart from the aid

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[13]Augustine, The City of God, Bk. XXII, Ch. 29.

of the body and therefore the "philosophers'" argument is fallacious.

Augustine concludes that:

> It may very well be, and it is thoroughly credible, that we shall in the future world see the material forms of the new heavens and the new earth in such a way that we shall most distinctly recognize God everywhere present and governing all things . . . and shall see Him. (Italics mine)

In the last clause here, Augustine does not mean that the saints, recognizing God's governance in the future world, will by implication recognize His presence, for he says that the saints

> will see Him, not as now we understand the invisible things of God, by the things which are made, and see Him darkly, as in a mirror, and in part, and rather by faith than by bodily vision of material appearances, but by means of the bodies we shall wear and which [the bodies of others] we shall see wherever we turn our [bodily] eyes. (Italics mine)

Thus, by "bodily vision of material appearances" the saints shall, Augustine thinks, see God "in Himself" (as well as recognize his governing presence "in the new heavens and the new earth, in every created thing which shall then exist"). Furthermore, not only does Augustine say in this passage that God Himself will be perceived by means of sense qualities but, even though he apparently continues to reject the notion that God has a proper sense-perceptible form, Augustine does say that:

> As we do not believe, but see that the living men around us who are exercising vital functions are alive, though we cannot see their life without their bodies, but see it most distinctly by means of their bodies, so wherever we shall look with those spiritual [bodily] eyes of our future bodies, we shall then, too, by means of bodily substances behold God, though a spirit, ruling all things. (Italics mine)

In a sense, the whole, divinely governed future material world will be God's proper sense-perceptible form; at least Augustine draws a parallel between sensibly perceiving that world and sensibly perceiv-

ing God and sensibly perceiving a human body and sensibly perceiving a human being, i.e. a soul.

Hence, despite, as we have seen in Chapter Two, Augustine's insistence on the sense imperceptibility of God, this allowance for God's sense perceptibility by means of sense qualities and, in a sense, by a proper sense-perceptible form, is at best difficult to reconcile with the strict construction of Augustine's position that it is inescapably logically necessary that God is sense imperceptible. Also, since angels, like God, are incorporeal, the possibility which Augustine envisions of the saints sensibly perceiving God in the future world is extendable, by parallel considerations, to angels. Thus, the same difficulties arise with a strict interpretation of Augustine's position that angels are logically necessarily sense imperceptible.

A logically possible universe will be defined as any universe, U, whose complete description is logically consistent--i.e. such that no two true statements of fact about U are of the form s and $\bar{s}$. As a first approximation, a statement, s, is logically necessary if s expresses a proposition which could not fail to be true no matter what the universe turned out to be like; i.e. if s expresses a proposition which is true in all logically possible universes.[14] This characterization of a logically necessary statement is not of much use

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[14] I prefer the locution "possible universe" to the locution "possible world" because it is less ambiguous even though that latter term has gained wide usage, especially because of its adoption by Leibniz. I feel that the use of "possible world" in modal analysis exemplifies the unfortunate predilection for philosophers to use technical terms which conflict with ordinary usage. In one common sense of "world," many worlds may exist within the same or the actual universe; only one universe can be the actual universe.

as it stands. G. E. Hughes and M. J. Cresswell, proposing a similar definition of a logically necessary statement (they consider propositions),[15] offer the prima facie unexceptional example, "There are no round squares," as an example of a logically necessary truth on this account. But according to the logical structure of which conceptual schema will we decide what limitations logical consistency places on how the universe might have turned out and what will count as facts about those possible universes such that no two statements, s and r, expressing such facts--e.g. "is round" and "is a square"--are logically contradictory? For what constitutes logical consistency as well as what will be accounted as fact depends on the logical structure of each conceptual schema.

Consider the statement, call it S, "there are no round squares." It is not even the case that the statement, if true within the language game correspondent to conceptual schema C_1, that "S is true within the conceptual structure of C_1" is true, without qualification, in all possible universes. Hence, S would not be a logically necessary truth on the definition under consideration. For, there may be a self-consistent conceptual schema, C_2, such that within the rules of the language games of a possessor, P, of C_2, S is merely nonsense. Then, in every possible universe which P can conceive of, "S is true within the conceptual structure of C_1" will not be true since P can, at most, merely know that possessors of C_1 claim that S is true while within the conceptual structure of his conceptual schema, C_2, S logically cannot be either true or false, being sheer nonsense.

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[15] G. E. Hughes and M. J. Cresswell, An Introduction to Modal Logic (London, 1972), pp. 22-23.

(Though P cannot from within the conceptual structure of C_2 correctly charge possessors of C_1 with countenancing nonsense since what is nonsense can only be correctly determined by applying the syntactical and semantical rules of the language game during the use of which the alleged nonsense occurs.)[16] Thus, "S is true within the conceptual structure of C_1," like any statement s whatever (other than the exception noted below), may not be true in all possible universes consistently conceivable by some possible conceiver.

Now, since there might be some logically possible universe--i.e. universes whose descriptions are self-consistent for some conceiver--in which the statement that spirits cannot be photographed is false (this may be the case in the actual universe in the future), this statement is not a logically necessary statement in the sense that it is true in all possible universes consistently conceivable by some possible conceiver. Again, if the claims of mystic literalists to have sense perceptions or experiences entailing possible sense perceptions of God and angels are to be taken as even remotely plausible, and if, e.g., the future sense perceptibility of God (and angels) envisioned by Augustine is to be commensurate with his general denial of the sense perceptibility of these beings, then it cannot be the case that statements of users of ordinary western theistic religious discourse that God and angels are sense imperceptible is logically necessary in this strong sense.

Besides these, we have already considered a number of other statements which are, apparently, necessarily true, where this is not

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[16] See pp. 260-261.

mere causal necessity, within one conceptual schema yet false within another conceptual schema. Among these statements, some were even necessarily true and then false within a later conceptual schema of the same person after his original conceptual schema had, in the face of certain repeated and undeniable experiences, been altered or evolved pragmatically in order to more conveniently and perspicuously order reality. This feature of all of these statements of being (sometimes trivially) necessarily true given the conceptual structure of one conceptual schema, false given that of another, argues for a reassessment of the applicability in these cases of logical necessity in the strong sense.

There is, to my mind, no evident reason why the mystics' claims should be considered prima facie logically inconsistent within their language games. More importantly, the analysis of "necessity" involved in the claims of users of theological discourse that God and angels are necessarily sense imperceptible which I will now suggest leaves open the possibility that <u>both</u> the users of non-mystic-literalist religious language <u>and</u> the mystic literalists are correct in their respective claims. Therefore I think that there are compelling reasons for analyzing the theological claim of the sense imperceptibility of God and angels as other than a logically necessary truth in the sense that it is true in all possible universes consistently conceivable by some possible conceiver.

Thus two notions of "logical" (a stronger than causal) necessity are indicated, each corresponding to a difference in how "possible universe" is interpreted in the definition of a logically necessary statement as a statement which expresses a proposition

which is "true in all logically possible universes." The stronger notion of logically necessary truths--corresponding to what I will call "hard" logical necessity--applies to statements which express propositions which are true in all possible universes conceivable by some possible conceiver. The weaker notion of logically necessary truths applies to statements which express propositions which are true in every universe which is possible given the logical structure of some specified conceptual schema. I will refer to the correspondent logical modality here as "soft logical necessity."

On this weaker notion, given some specified conceptual schema, C, a statement, S_1, is logically necessary relative to C if and only if there is at least one logically possible universe--i.e. there is at least one universe that has a complete description which is consistent with the conceptual structure of C--and S_1 is true in every such logically possible universe. That is, S_1 is logically necessary relative to C if and only if S_1 is true in all, and is true in at least one, of those universes logically possible given the structure of C.[17] Logically necessary statements of this weaker sort will be designated "conceptual-schema-necessary statements" whenever it is expedient to distinguish them from the stronger sort of logically necessary statements.[18] More often, though, two conversing parties are using much

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[17]Statements which are logically necessary in this weaker sense, being true in only a subset of the set of all possible universes conceivable by some possible conceiver, are like causally necessary statements in that the latter express propositions which are true in all, but only those, universes which are causally possible given the causal laws operative vis-a-vis a particular conceptual schema.

[18]It might be the case that every statement well-formed rela-

the same language games and the same senses of "logical necessity" (and "possibility") and they do not need to, and do not, explicitly state whether they are using the stronger or weaker senses of these terms.

There are two notions of "possible universe" correlated with the stronger and weaker senses of logically necessary truths. Universes whose descriptions are both self-consistent and conceivable by some possible conceiver possessing any self-consistent conceptual schema are "possible universes" in a broad sense and correlate with the stronger notion of logically necessary. Universes whose descriptions are both self-consistent and conceivable by some possible conceiver possessing a <u>particular</u> self-consistent conceptual schema are "possible universes" in a narrow sense and correlate with the weaker form of logically necessary. These last are "conceptual-schema-relative possible universes," universes which are possible relative to the conceptual structure of <u>some particular</u> conceptual schema, <u>C</u>.

"Possible conceiver" is, of course, itself a conceptual-schema-relative notion and I will restrict the extension of this locution to conceivers possessing a conceptual schema the conceptual structure of which is self-consistent. Since (parts of) the conceptual structure of one conceiver's conceptual schema may be nonsense, and hence neither self-consistent nor contradictory, from the point of view of

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tive to a particular conceptual schema, <u>C</u>, is a conceptual-schema-necessary truth relative to some possible, in the weak sense, conceptual schema, though every statement well-formed relative to <u>C</u> will not be conceptual-schema-relative necessary relative to a <u>rational</u> or pragmatically <u>reasonable</u>, relative to <u>C</u>, conceptual schema.

another conceiver, it may not be possible for a particular conceiver to tell whether certain purported conceptual schemas could be possessed by a possible conceiver.

How one interprets "conceive" in the locution "conceive as a possible universe" determines how possible universes in the narrower sense are circumscribed.[19] Call "accessibility" the relation which must obtain between each member of a set of logically possible universes and a particular universe, $\underline{U}_1$, if a particular statement, $\underline{S}$, is to be logically necessary in the weak sense for a percipient's, $\underline{P}$'s, conceptual schema, where, given $\underline{P}$'s conceptual schema, $\underline{U}_1$ is the actual universe. $\underline{U}_i$ is accessible to $\underline{U}_1$ if $\underline{U}_i$ is conceptual-schema-relative possible on the conceptual schema of the percipient, $\underline{P}$, whose conceptual schema entails the logical necessity of $\underline{S}$.[20] Now, $\underline{U}_1$ could be said to be accessible, that is conceptual-schema-relative possible to $\underline{U}_1$ either if (i) $\underline{P}$ can conceive of any of the parts of a complete description of $\underline{U}_i$ excluding the conceptual structures of the conceptual schemas of the percipients, if any, in $\underline{U}_1$, or if (ii) $\underline{P}$ can conceive of any part of the complete description of $\underline{U}_i$ <u>including</u> the conceptual structures of the conceptual schemas of the percipients, if any, in $\underline{U}_1$.

Alternative (i) clearly allows for a greater number of

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[19]The following discussion follows that of Hughes and Cresswell, in <u>An Introduction to Modal Logic</u>, pp. 77-78. The notion of "accessibility" is not, though, meant to be precisely equivalent to the one they use.

[20]For the answer to why different sets of universes will not be accessible to a universe, $\underline{U}$, because of differences in the logical structures of the conceptual schemas of the various percipients in $\underline{U}$ see p. 266.

conceptual-schema-relative possible universes relative to a given conceptual schema. I defined a possible universe as one whose complete description was self-consistent. Consistency is a conceptual-schema-relative notion. Thus, I have delimited conceptual-schema-relative possible universes in terms of accessibility of type (ii) since it seems to me that for a statement, S, to be conceptual-schema-relative logically necessary for P, P will have to be able to understand, though he may disagree about the truth value of, every statement constitutive of the complete description of every possible universe in which S is true. And, the complete description of every universe conceptual-schema-relative possible relative to P's conceptual schema, C, will have to be consistent given the logical structure of C. A universe, U, cannot, to my mind, be conceptual-schema-possible relative to P's conceptual schema if part of U's purported description is nonsensical for P, and that would be the case if the conceptual structure of the conceptual schema of some conceiver in U was nonsensical to P. This is, of course, to follow the logic of only one of the possible alternative interpretations of "accessibility" "conceivability" and, hence, "conceptual-schema-relative possible universe" but we must always reason according to the rules of the language game of some correspondent conceptual schema subset: that is entailed by the cognitive relativism of the sort I have proposed here and is one of its drawbacks.

The set of all universes whose descriptions are self-consistent divides into subsets, which need not be mutually exclusive, of conceptual-schema-possible universes. A complete set of conceptual-schema-relative possible universes possible relative to a particular

schema, C, is delimited as a subset of the set of all logically possible universes in the broad sense by the meaning restrictions which the conceptual structure of C imposes together with the restriction of self-consistency within C. Since the limits of possible self-consistent conceptual schemas are simply the limits of self-consistency, only self-consistency relative to some possible conceptual schema limits membership in the set of all conceptual-schema-relative possible universes which are members of some set of conceptual-schema-possible universes relative to some possible conceptual schema.

Now, using this notion of conceptual-schema-relative necessity, we can do the following two things. (1) We can reconcile the extreme non-mystic-literalist position that God is necessarily sense imperceptible with the mystic literalist's claims to have sense perceptions or experiences entailing possible sense perceptions of God and angels. And this can be done without construing the former as obviously false while at the same time making intelligible the latter claim. (2) We can make sense out of a claim, like Augustine's, that God necessarily cannot be perceived in this life though He may be sense perceptible during the beatific vision, as well as determine the status of the necessity operator in claims of this sort.

Within the language games of those using ordinary non-mystic-literalist religious discourse, it is a conceptual-schema-relative necessary truth that God and angels are sense-imperceptible beings. For members of the community of percipients possessing this conceptual schema, it is the case both that there is no possible experience which they could have which could count as an actual sense experience

of God or of an angel, and that no possible being in no possible world, in the narrow sense, could have a sense perception of God or of an angel. On the other hand, for the user of mystic literalist religious discourse there is some conceptual-schema-relative, relative to their conceptual schema, logically possible universe in which God and angels are sensibly perceived (this could be true in the actual world) and there is some conceptual-schema-relative logically possible universe in which God and angels are not perceived by the senses of human perceivers. Further, the latter statements, for example, are only true, in virtue of their conceptual schema, <u>within</u> the language game(s) of perception and religion of the users of mystic literalist western religious discourse. Finally, Augustine's claim that God (and angels) is (are) necessarily sense imperceptible involves conceptual-schema-relative logical necessity. That he allows for sense perceptions of God during the beatific vision can be made consistent with the first claim through a recognition (though Augustine would not have thought of it in these terms) of the possibility of a change, where necessary, in the conceptual schema of all the saints, including Augustine, to that of a mystic literalist.

III

This, tentatively, resolves the conflict between the claims of the non-mystic-literalist and the mystic literalist, but suppose the user of non-mystic-literalist religious discourse insists that his claims of God's and angels' sense imperceptibility are not merely conceptual-schema-relative necessarily true but are logically true in the strong sense. There might be other statements which are logically

true in the strong sense, but I think careful consideration will show that the claims in question of the non-mystic-literalist certainly are not.

In fact, I am inclined to think that only the law of non-contradiction--that no statement (relative to a particular universe) can be both true and false--is logically true in the strong sense.[21] This is the consequence of the recent onslaught against the old analytic-synthetic distinction. As Quine says, "any statement [not quite any statement] can be held true come what may, if we make drastic enough adjustments elsewhere in the system."[22] The law of non-contradiction is itself a logically necessary truth in the strong sense because (i) being necessary for reasoning, it is essential to rational meta-reasons for choosing one conceptual schema subset over

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[21]Descartes thought that God could have made logically necessary truths--such as that all the radii of a circle are equal or that twice four is eight--false. (See The Philosophical Works of Descartes Vol. II, trans. Haldane and Ross [London, 1911], p. 251.) If it is God who gives us the innate dispositions which we possess to acquire the use of certain deductive and inductive logics and to acquire the belief that certain statements are logically necessary and who effects some of the environmental influences on our acquisition of a conceptual schema, then insofar as God's actions thereby affect the conceptual structure of the conceptual schemas which we acquire, Descartes' assertion is right at least in this one respect: God could have "made" logically necessary truths, in the weak sense, other than they are for any given conceiver. (Descartes himself was considering strongly logically necessary truths.)

However, I think Descartes is mistaken to suppose that God could make it that "contradictories should . . . be able to be together" (Letter of May 2, 1644, to Mesland, cited in Frankfort, "The Logic of Omnipotence," Philosophical Review 1964, pp. 262-263). Truths, given the conceptual structure of one conceptual schema, may seem contradictory from the point of view of another conceptual schema, but it cannot be the case, within the conceptual structure of any particular conceptual schema, that a truth be contradictory and that the law of non-contradiction not hold.

[22]Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," p. 43.

another and (ii) it possesses a unique pragmatic element since to deny the law of non-contradiction is utterly irrational because self-stultifying. This is why I earlier defined a "possible conceiver" in terms of the self-consistency of the possessed conceptual schema.

The truth of the law of non-contradiction is essential to any line of reasoning or to any intelligible statement. Thus, Quine's statement, that any statement can be held come what may, is only intelligible on the assumption that its negation is not concomitantly true also. And, clearly, it would be unintelligible to use allegedly rational discourse, dependent on the law of non-contradiction, to argue that the proposition expressed by the law of non-contradiction might be false in some conceptual-schema-relative universe. This proposal could not even be framed, and would always fall into sheer nonsense, since an argument is only valid when, if the premises are true, the conclusion could not be false.

Furthermore, because of its position as the single absolute basis of reason and rationality, the law of non-contradiction is uniquely the ultimate and only incontrovertible constituent of the pragmatic. As Aristotle observed in the Metaphysics about this "most indisputable of all principles":

> We can . . . demonstrate . . . that this view [the denial of the law of non-contradiction] is impossible, if our opponent will only say something . . . which is significant both for himself and for another; for this is necessary if he really is to say anything. For, if he means nothing, such a man will not be capable of reasoning, either with himself or with another.[23]

The cognitively significant is not self-contradictory and only the

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[23]Aristotle, Metaphysics, in The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, 1941), 10069 12-25.

cognitively significant is cognitively purposive.

The only possible candidates besides the law of non-contradiction for statements that are logically true in the strong sense would be any statement, $\underline{S}_1$, such that the following conditions hold. (i) $\underline{S}_1$ is true in many conceptual-schema-relative possible universes. (ii) For each conceptual-schema-relative, relative to a conceptual schema, $\underline{C}$, possible universe, $\underline{U}$, in which $\underline{S}_1$ is not true, $\underline{S}_1$ is not nonsense relative to $\underline{C}$ in $\underline{U}$ and there is no statement, $\underline{S}_2$, which is logically inconsistent in the weak sense in $\underline{U}$ and which has the same meaning as $\underline{S}_1$--that is, in any possible universe, $\underline{U}$, in which $\underline{S}_1$ is not true, there <u>is</u> no statement $\underline{S}_2$, no statement conceivable given $\underline{C}$, which has the same meaning as $\underline{S}_1$. This might hold for certain primitive statements in mathematics. For example, it might be logically necessary in the strong sense, and not merely conceptual-schema-relative necessary, to claim that it is false that, stated within the language of ordinary mathematics, $2 + 2 = 5$. This claim might be logically necessary in the strong sense if in order for this claim to be false, the <u>meanings</u> of the tokens of some or all of the mathematical symbols involved here would have to be altered so fundamentally that the same concepts and conceptual relationships would not be denoted by this usage of "$2 + 2 = 5$" as is denoted by the usage of "$2 + 2 = 5$" in our ordinary language game of mathematics and one would no longer in any sense <u>mean</u> the same thing by "$2 + 2 = 5$" as is meant by this sentence in ordinary mathematics.

The claims of the users of ordinary theological western religious discourse do not meet the criteria for a statement to be logically necessarily true in the strong sense if it is not simply true

in all conceptual-schema-relative universes since their statements, accorded the same meaning, are false within the logic of the language games of mystic literalists. However, C. I. Lewis's general discussion of changes of conceptual schema would appear to dispute this since he seems to deny the possibility of alterations of conceptual schemas--viz. changes in conceptual schemas such that the logical structure of the new schema contradicts that of the old schema--and by implication denies differences of conceptual schema of type D_2, differences in which, meanings remaining invariant, two schemas, taken conjointly, contradict each other. Lewis suggests that:

> What was previously regarded as real--e.g. disease entities --may come to be looked upon as unreal, and what was previously taken to be unreal--e.g. curved space--may be admitted to reality. But when this happens the truth remains unaltered and new truth and old truth do not contradict. Categories and concepts do not literally change; they are simply given up and replaced by new ones . . . Any contradiction between the old truth and the new is verbal only, because the old word "disease" has a new meaning.[24]

Mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists are not, as Lewis's statement might imply, merely engaged in a verbal dispute over the sense perceptibility of God and angels, just as, e.g., pre- and post-Copernican western astronomers are not engaged in a mere verbal dispute over the mutability of the heavens. Though Lewis is right in saying that often our categories and concepts are given up, the implication that this is the only sort of change that can occur in our conceptual schemas (or that the only sort of differences of conceptual schemas is one involving utterly different meanings for the same symbols) is at best misleading.

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[24]Lewis, Mind and the World Order, pp. 268-269.

Suppose we found a tribe that claimed that it is a necessary truth that 2 + 2 = 5. And suppose that upon further investigation we were to discover that when they count the sequence of the integers is given as 1, 2, 3, 5, 4, 6, . . . Clearly the meaning of the symbols "five" and "5" in their language differs profoundly and fundamentally from the meaning of these symbols in our language game of arithmetic. We do not contradict this tribe when we say that 2 + 2 = 4, and any dispute we might have over their contention that 2 + 2 = 5 is merely a verbal one. It is a necessary truth that the entities we refer to by "five" and they refer to by "five" are numbers, are greater than zero, and so on. But none of the uniquely identifying necessary properties of the entities denoted by the locutions "four" and "five" in our language game of arithmetic are properties of the entities denoted by "four" and "five" in the society where "2 + 2 = 5" is a logically necessary truth; in fact the converse is true, and, after careful consideration, the members of both societies would agree that the referent of the locutions is different in the two language games. The semantical disagreement here is both a thorough intentional and extensional one. This is why we and this other tribe do not mean the same thing by "2 + 2 = 5" and why our dispute, if any, is merely verbal.

Unlike the altercation between users of our ordinary language game of arithmetic and those in the society where 2 + 2 = 5, and unlike past users of "disease entities" and our contemporary medical communities' use of "disease," non-mystic-literalist theologians like Maimonides, Augustine, and Thomas, and users of mystic literalist religious and perceptual discourse mean the same thing by the terms

they use in expressing their respective claims. They mean the same thing when they use perception locutions like "see," "touch," and "sense perceptibility," and, in an important and in the relevant sense, they mean the same thing in their usage of "God" and "angel," and when they assert that "God and angels are (or are not) sense perceptible."

The only difference in the extensional logic of the two language games of perception of the mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists is the extension of the terms "sense perceptible" and "sense imperceptible"--where both expressions are used in the mode of conceptual-schema-necessity. Users of non-mystic-literalist religious and perceptual discourse include in the extension of the term "sense imperceptible" God and angels, and in some cases more broadly only include physical phenomena and physical objects as members of the set of entities to which "sense perceptibility" extends, while users of mystic literalist discourse deny this extension and include God and angels in the scope of the extension of the term "sense perceptible." That, after all, is what constitutes their difference of conceptual schemas of type D_2. Such limited differences of extensionality of two different usages of a term, unlike a mutually exclusive difference of extensionality, does not constitute a difference of meaning. We would not, for example, doubt our agreement with another percipient's meaning for "chair" if, while agreeing about every other designation of chairhood by ostension, we disagreed only about whether or not an admittedly difficult case counts as being a chair. (We might want to say here that the family resemblance shared by chairs simply becomes imprecise and uncertain near its limits.)

Now, while there is a kind of difference of meaning in their usage of "God" and "angel" which is a difference in the intentionality of these terms, there is a meaningful point of debate between mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists because in another, important sense, they do mean the same thing by these terms. There are in this regard two kinds of differences of meaning: radical differences which entail mere verbal disputes and "non-stultifying meaning differences" which make meaningful debate possible between the differing parties concerning certain aspects of the terms in question.

The altercation between the mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists is only in an uninformative and misleading sense verbal. First, it cannot be plausibly conceived of as a mere verbal dispute like that between us and the society in which "2 + 2 = 5" is a truth of mathematics. In the present case, the dispute arises because of a difference of conceptual schemas betwen mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists: a substantive basis for their altercation. Second, significantly verbal disputes rest on radical if not complete disagreements about the intention and extension of the terms in question.

As an example of a non-stultifying difference of meaning, consider the locution "triangle" as it is used in Lobachevskian, Euclidean, and Riemannian geometry. A term can be used with more or less specificity. Define a "substantive meaning" (there may be more than one) of a term vis-a-vis several different specified language games across which there is some variation of meaning as the basic meaning given that term by the users of the differing language games in question such that they both agree about that meaning and agree

on the referent of the term. For any term, T, the substantive meaning will be symbolized as T_s. Linguistic contexts requiring only a substantive meaning of a locution are contexts requiring only a low degree of specificity of that term. "Substantive meanings for terms" is a multi-conceptual-schema-relative notion.

Define an "exhaustive meaning"--there will always be more than one, though only one for each language game--of a term, T, in a particular language game, L, as the complete meaning, correspondent to T_s for terms having multiple exhaustive meanings, in L, accorded T in L. An exhaustive meaning of a term, which is conceptual-schema-relative, will be symbolized by T_e.

For any term, T the T_s relative to several specified language games is a subset of the correspondent T_e's of those language games and is the core or elemental meaning of which those T_e's are an extension. Linguistic contexts in a language game, L, requiring the exhaustive meaning relative to L of a locution are contexts requiring a high degree of specificity of that term. A substantive meaning of "triangle" vis-a-vis the Lobachevskian, Euclidean and Riemannian geometries is "a plane figure with three sides and three angles." The exhaustive meaning of "triangle" in Lobachevskian geometry includes "having three angles whose sum is less than 180^0," in Euclidean geometry "having three angles whose sum is exactly 180^0," and in Riemannian geometry "having three angles whose sum is more than 180^0."

Now, even though the exhaustive meanings of "triangle" in the language games of these three geometries are, conjointly, mutually exclusive, users of the three geometries must <u>mean</u> the same thing by "triangle" insofar as, e.g., we can meaningfully talk about the sum-

mation of degrees each assigns to triangles and they can meaningfully agree that they assign a different summation of degrees to a triangle and can meaningfully disagree with the usefulness, etc., and hence comprehend, the others' positions: here they mean the same thing in a substantive meaning sense of "triangle." If a Lobachevskian, Euclidean, and Riemannian are eating a meal together, and there is one rather triangular piece of bread among several square pieces on the table, any of the three can ask the others to "pass the triangular piece of bread," confident that the others will know what he means. It is given that agreement about "triangle$_s$" that each can disagree with the others about the usefulness, etc., of their use of "triangle$_e$," or argue, e.g., about whether triangles in physical space are in fact Euclidean or Riemannian or Lobachevskian.

The larger issue at stake here is what is the criterion for identity of concepts across different conceptual schemas; when does concept c_1, in conceptual schema C_1, count as the same concept as concept c_2 in conceptual schema C_2? For any particular locution, T, it cannot be cogently argued that some specified T_s or T_e are the same within two different conceptual schemas--for to do so is to argue from within a conceptual schema subset, either the conceptual schema subset given the conceptual structure of which T_s or T_e are different, or the conceptual schema subset in which they are the same. The only criterion which can be used for sameness of meaning not settled by cognizers, who already agree that they possess the same relevant conceptual schema subset, as an "internal" question, is whether or not the possessors of different (or apparently different) conceptual schemas agree, after careful, clearheaded consideration, that T_s or T_e

in the other's conceptual schema is the same.[25] What in effect happens in that case is that the possessors of the two schemas in question are willing to accept arguments to the effect that T_s or T_e is the same: but that shows that T_s or T_e is the same because to that extent their conceptual schemas are identical, that is have the identical relevant conceptual schema subset.

Mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists both agree that they, basically, mean the same thing by "God" and "angel"--but any argument to the effect that they mean the same thing begs the question since it assumes a sameness of conceptual schemas in this respect. Their intentional use of these terms is very nearly identical: they both refer to the same being when, e.g., they use "God" or "Ruler of the Universe" (which Aquinas thought "God" means),[26] and they both predicate the same essential attributes, excepting sense imperceptibility, to the divine beings denoted by "God" and "angels." This agreement about the meaning of "God" and "angel" is an agreement about a form of "God_s." On the other hand they possess different concepts denoted by the locution "God_e," and hence different conceptual schema subsets involving this concept--one intersection of these different conceptual schema subsets being "God_s." However the mystic literalists' and non-mystic-literalists' agreement about "God_s" is profoundly closer to each percipient group's conception of "God_e" than

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[25]For simple, unanalyzable concepts like "red," concept identity across conceptual schemas will be decided on the basis of agreement of ostension.

[26]Though, as the fact that "evening star" and "morning star" refer to the same entity, Venus, yet mean different things shows, meaning and reference are not the same, still if a locution has a

the closeness of the Lobachevskians', Euclideans', and Riemannians' agreement about "triangle$_s$" is to their own conceptions of "triangle$_e$."

Now, the point of conflict between the mystic literalists and the non-mystic-literalists is precisely the question, given the same exhaustive meaning for perception locutions and given the same substantive meaning for "God" and "angel" and thus in this sense talking about the same divine beings, whether or not it is pragmatically expedient to conceive of God and angels as possessing, besides their other (agreed upon) essential attributes, the further conceptual-schema-relative essential attribute of sense imperceptibility. It is when either group poses the question respecting "God$_e$" relative to its language game(s), "Is the being denoted by 'God$_s$' also correctly denoted by 'God$_e$'?" that the answer is trivially "yes."

This parallels, I take it, the point of conflict between the pre- and post-Copernicans: given that they share a substantive meaning for "heavens," and given that they share an exhaustive meaning for "mutability," "observation," etc., is it pragmatically more expedient in the light of their collective experiences to regard the heavens as mutable or immutable? For the pre-Copernican western astronomers, it is a necessary truth that the heavens are immutable. (No entity could be only contingently immutable.) But this is not to say that were a post-Copernican to convince a pre-Copernican that the heavens are mutable, the latter would thereby become convinced that the heavens do not exist. He can still, e.g., point upward and say, "Now

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complete difference of reference between two language games, that entails a difference of meaning for that locution between those language games.

I see that <u>that</u> thing where the stars are is not immutable." He preserves his "heavens$_s$" usage--otherwise the post-Copernican could not have convinced him about <u>anything</u> about what the pre-Copernican calls the "heavens"--but changes his "heavens$_e$" usage. In contrast, were one to convince a Euclidean, Riemannian or Lobachevskian that a triangle did not have three sides, one would have convinced him that triangles do not exist: either because he has become convinced that the concept of triangle is nonsensical or because he has become convinced that it is logically contradictory. In the first instance he does not retain "triangle$_s$" and no longer <u>in any sense</u> means the same thing by "triangle."

Were the mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists and the pre- and post-Copernican astronomers to <u>in every sense mean</u> different things by the key terms in question, any argument between them would be senseless, a mere verbal dispute--which it clearly is not; in the first instance, were either group to claim, using the rules and meanings of <u>their</u> language games, that the being denoted by "God$_s$" is also denoted by "God$_e$," they would be begging the question. And hence contrary to Lewis's suggestion, the differences of conceptual schemas between these two pairs of percipients cannot be facilely dismissed as either the giving up of old concepts and categories or simply the possession of <u>all</u> radically different concepts and categories.

Now, since the mystic literalist position is self-consistent while their claims do <u>not</u> falsely appear to differ from those of the non-mystic-literalists because of a mere verbal dispute, the <u>non</u>-mystic-literalist claims do not meet the criteria, of a change in

meaning in all conceptual-schema-relative universes in which they are not simply true, for statements to be logically necessary in the strong sense. Therefore it is simply false for the non-mystic-literalist to claim that mystic literalist claims are logically inconsistent in the strong sense.

What is the modal status of the claims of the mystic literalists? A statement, S, is conceptual-schema-relative possible within some conceptual schema, C, if and only if there is some member of the set of universes which are conceptual-schema-possible relative to C in which the proposition which S expresses is true. It must be remembered that since what is real is determined by the conceptual structure of each conceptual schema, all contingent truths are conceptual schema relative. There is no contingent truth simpliciter; a statement is only contingently true given the conceptual structure of a particular schema.[27] For any particular conceptual schema, C_1, the member of the set comprising all the conceptual-schema-possible universes relative to C_1 which is, relative to C_1 designated as the actual universe, may be a different conceptual-schema-relative possible universe, than that designated as the actual universe relative to some other conceptual schema, C_2.[28] Thus, within the conceptual

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[27]Though there may be conceptual schemas, which I will discuss below--say those possessed by omniscient beings--which are "supervening" conceptual schemas under which all other self-consistent conceptual schemas are subsumable and such that there is a sense in which what is contingently true within these conceptual schemas can be considered contingently true simpliciter.

[28]William James said that, "we have to live today by what truth we can get today, and be ready tomorrow to call it falsehood" (James, "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth," in Essays in Pragmatism [New York, repr. 1969]). Certainly a queer enough looking statement. However, I think that the notion of conceptual-schema-relative

structure of the conceptual schema of non-mystic-literalists, it would be a contingent truth about the actual universe that a particular percipient did not, as he might profess, literally see and touch God, but only, e.g., suffered the hallucination of seeing and touching God since it is necessarily true (in the weak sense) that God cannot be perceived by means of sense perceptions. At the same time it may be a contingent truth about the actual universe (within his conceptual schema) for the mystic literalist in question that he did see and touch God.

IV

Having determined that their altercation is not merely verbal, the sort of contradiction which holds between the claims of the user of non-mystic-literalist religious discourse that God and angels are sense imperceptible and the mystic literalist's denial of this is now apparent. On the analysis offered above there is clearly no logical contradiction in supposing that both positions are correct. Understanding conceptual schema necessity as the modal operator in the

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contingent truths and the manner in which a statement can be a logical truth within one conceptual schema while its contradictory is a contingent truth within another conceptual schema helps to elucidate the pragmatist theory of truth.

The early pragmatists were fundamentally correct in asserting that truth is changeable or, more importantly, what is true evolves in view of one's experiences. Contingent truths are not true, period, even though they are true for a particular person at a particular time: i.e. as long as he retains the relevant aspects of his present conceptual schema. If one accepts the notion of conceptual-schema-relative contingent truths, then the possibility of differences of conceptual schemas and of changes in one's own conceptual schema will account for the reason why the pragmatists were right in contending that contingent truths are not true simpliciter and that a contingent truth today may become a falsehood tomorrow.

non-mystic-literalist theological claim that God and angels are necessarily sense imperceptible, it is clearly only within the non-mystic-literalist language game of perception that it is linguistically odd to claim that one might or does perceive God or an angel (the beings denoted by "God_S" and "$angel_S$," respectively) by means of either sense qualities or a proper sense-perceptible form of these beings. Within the logical structure of the conceptual schema of the user of non-mystic-literalist western religious discourse and perceptual discourse, the mystic literalist's claim to have, or for there to have been, sense perceptions of God or angels is contradictory--but involving a conceptual-schema-relative contradiction.

Consider the Numbers 12 assertion that Moses sees the form of God, or the prophet's claim in Isaiah 6 to have actually seen God and the angels surrounding Him, or Ezekiel's reported claim in Ezekiel 4 to have seen God in a human form, or St. Teresa's claim to see "an angel close by me, on my left side, in bodily form. . . . I saw in his left hand a long spear of gold and at the iron's point there seemed to be a little fire. He appeared to be thrusting it at times into my heart."[29] This sensory talk about these incorporeal celestial beings is not logically inconsistent within the language game in which these claims are made; it simply exhibits the logic of a conceptual schema which is different--i.e. has a different exhaustive meaning for "God" and "angel"--from the schema of the users of the language game of ordinary, non-mystic-literalist religious and perceptual discourse. Within the rules of the language games of perceptual and religious

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[29]St. Teresa, Life, Ch. 29:16, 17.

discourse of the mystic literalists it is a contradiction to deny the possibility of sense perceptions of God--again, a conceptual-schema-relative contradiction.

Thus interpreted, the mystic literalist and non-mystic-literalist positions do not conjointly imply a contradiction. Each assertion about "God_s" and "$angel_s$" only contradicts the other when both are construed as being true relative only to either the mystic literalist or non-mystic-literalist conceptual schema. This parallels the fact that the pre- and post-Copernican western astronomers do not contradict each other in their assertions about the immutability and mutability of the heavens: unless they erroneously neglect the fact that they speak from different language games. At no point may the possessors of the new or different conceptual schema correctly charge the possessors of the old or opposing conceptual schema with being illogical or incoherent or unsystematic or unscientific (excepting, of course, instances in which the possessors of the old or opposing conceptual schema make logical mistakes or mistakes of methodology or scientific method while using the logically consistent conceptual structure of that conceptual schema).

Therefore, when, in relating their visionary experiences, mystic literalists claim to have <u>literally</u> seen, touched, etc., God or Christ or an angel, one of the "flagging" operations which <u>should</u> be performed by the locutions "mystical experience" or "vision" is to alert the user of non-mystic-literalist religious discourse to the possible use of a conceptual schema(s) and a language game(s) of religion and of perception which is different from that of ordinary religious discourse. And, in fact, as we saw in Chapter Four, in

both the ordinary theological discourse and the mystic literalist religious discourse the effect of differences of conceptual schemas--at least in terms of dispositional expectations--on mystic perceptions is occasionally implicitly recognized.[30] Besides the observations in Chapter Four to this effect, it has already been remarked that Martin Buber, in Moses, attributes Ezekiel's perception of God in a human-like form to "theological speculation" and in this same vein, Maimonides makes the striking claim that "every appearance of an angel is part of a prophetic vision, depending on the capacity of the person that perceives it."[31] Finally it can be added that Al-Ghazzali says of the Vision of God that:

> This Vision will not be shared alike by all who know, but their discernment of it will vary exactly as their knowledge. God is one, but He will be seen in many different ways, just as one object is reflected in different ways by different mirrors, some showing it straight, and some distorted.[32]

In these and similar passages from the Jewish and Muslim traditions, the percipients' possession of the same "God_s" and "$angel_s$" is presupposed--otherwise it would be senseless to talk about all of the

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[30] See pp. 166-167.

[31] Maimonides, Guide, Pt. II, Ch. 6.

[32] Al-Ghazzali, The Alchemy of Happiness, pp. 125-126. Trimingham, in The Sufi Orders in Islam (p. 288), makes in this regard the general remark that the Sufis

> believed, not merely in the reality of the supernatural world, but in its ever-present reality. Should we hear someone say that he had found himself in the actual presence of the Prophet, who had called him to a mission, we might feel embarrassed and take him to be suffering from visual and auditory hallucinations. It is the same when we read the lives of the Sufis . . . [but] we have to remember that each one of us is enveloped in a world of unconscious assumptions which give structure and meaning to our experience, shaping our way of expressing that experience in our worlds.

percipients' knowledge of God or of angels--while a difference in the exhaustive meanings (though of course the authors do not think of them as exhaustive meanings) of "God" and "angel" is regarded as effecting differences in the percipients' perceptions of the beings denoted by "God_S" and "$angel_S$."

However, one last alternative type of possible conflict remains between mystic literalists and the users of ordinary theological religious discourse. If the mystic literalist position does not contradict that of the non-mystic-literalist and if their dispute is not merely verbal, perhaps mystic literalist statements are prima facie linguistically odd not because the non-mystic-literalist fatuously assumes the use of the rules of his language games but because the mystic literalist statements are simply nonsense.

Concerning the relation between nonsense and possible experience, C. I. Lewis remarks that:

> The limits of the possibility of experience are the limits of meaningful conception . . . what is beyond our powers of conception has no meaning; the word which is supposed to denote it is a nonsense syllable . . . We can understand anything in one way or another.[33]

Lewis is correct in saying that nonsense does not denote any possible state of affairs and, hence, whatever a nonsense statement is alleged to denote is obviously beyond the limits of experience. But, this observation needs two qualifications: (1) logical impossibilities can be meaningfully understood in the sense that we understand that the state of affairs purportedly denoted by a logical contradiction is logically impossible,[34] but logical impossibilities are also beyond

[33] Lewis, Mind and the World Order, pp. 217-219.

[34] Logical impossibilities are sometimes also meaningfully

the limits of possible experience since there is no possible, in the weak sense, state of affairs denoted by a logical contradiction, and (2) nonsense and logical contradictions relative to the conceptual structure of a conceptual schema, C, are both beyond the limits of possible experience for a percipient possessing C.

Now first, nonsense occurs during the use of a language game either when one deviates from the syntax of that language game or when one uses meaningless expressions with the appearance of a proper use of syntax (or when both occur). An example of the former is, "Maroon ideas wear fedoras fatuously," and of the latter, supposing that Carroll had not offered a lexicon for his Jabberwocky poem, "gimbling in the wabe." In either case, nonsense results when someone who normally uses or is familiar with the rules of a particular language game, L, misuses--whether inadvertently or purposely--the rules of L. The result is nonsense only for those who use L or only insofar as the result is judged in accordance with the rules of L. Since mystic literalists are using a different language game of perception regarding the perceptibility of God and angels, non-mystic-literalists cannot charge them with simply uttering nonsense. For, to do so would involve the mistake of judging the statements of the mystic literalists according to the rules of the non-mystic-literalist language game.

Secondly, mystic literalists' claims--e.g. that the being denoted by "God_s" is also denoted by, relative to the mystic literal-

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understood in the sense that we can comprehend or even produce a proof of the logical inconsistency entailed by the envisioned impossibility.

ist language game(s), "God_e"--cannot be nonsensical vis-a-vis the rules of the language games of the users of non-mystic-literalist religious and perceptual discourse since they are perfectly understandable given the rules of the non-mystic-literalist language games: they are understood to be logically inconsistent and perhaps even provably logically inconsistent.

To reemphasize and expand a point that was made at the end of Chapter Two, besides the fact that there is no direct logical contradiction between mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists and that their altercation is neither merely verbal nor attributable by one side to a nonsensical position on the other, the general theological positions of each of these two groups of percipients is for the most part not impugned by that of the other. We saw in Chapter Two that on the mystic literalist position that God and angels possess a proper sense-perceptible form, modelled on but more transient than the dualist notion of the mind-body relationship, mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists ascribe most of the same attributes, including incorporeality, to God and angels--except sense perceptibility.

Non-mystic-literalist theologians such as Anselm and Aquinas held the doctrine of essential predication concerning the divine attributes. According to this doctrine, all the divine attributes--e.g. omnipotence, omniscience, incorporeality--are essential properties of God. That is, under this doctrine, God would not <u>logically</u>, in the weak sense, be the individual He is if He did not possess each of the divine attributes. Though this is conceptual-schema-relative logical necessity, mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists possess the same logical structure in their conceptual schema subsets

concerning most of the divine attributes except sense perceptibility (or imperceptibility). Further, their conceptions of God including His sense perceptibility or sense imperceptibility are jointly intelligible as long as each is individually assessed by the rules of the one appropriate language game. On the other hand, I think that relatively minor changes might be made in the ordinary religious discourse's conception of God if one wanted to regard the mystic literalist position as within the realm of orthodoxy.

For instance, I think that it is fair to say that the theological doctrine of the incorporeality of God is a more central and crucial tenet of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition than the assertion of God's sense imperceptibility. The sense imperceptibility of God is even often thought of as being derivable from the doctrine of God's incorporeality. Therefore, while incorporeality is a mutually shared conceptual-schema-relative necessary essential attribute of God, the secondary, treated as derivative, attribute of sense imperceptibility could be taken as only a <u>conceptual-schema-relative</u> necessary attribute of God, but not as an essential attribute, on the conceptual schema of the non-mystic-literalists. (This would presuppose that everything conceptually entailed by a concept is not an essential attribute of the entities denoted by that concept.)

Even though this view denies that sense imperceptibility is an essential divine attribute, it does preserve what to my mind is the most significant aspect of the predication in the theological discourse of the sense imperceptibility of God. Non-mystic-literalist users of western religious discourse want to claim that it is <u>necessarily</u> true that God and angels are not sense perceptible either by

means of sense qualities or a proper sense-perceptible form, and they mean by this to make a stronger claim than merely that it is causally necessary that God and angels are sense imperceptible and that if God were to change the causal laws in the appropriate respects He and angels would then be perceptible. The position that God and angels are conceptual-schema-relative necessarily sense imperceptible will capture both the modal element of the theological predication of this attribute to Him and the idea that this modal feature involves a stronger assertion than just that this is a property which He possesses, given the operative causal laws, by causal necessity. And, on the other hand, insofar as God and angels are sense perceptible by means of a proper sense perceptible form on the mystic literalist account, it will simply be a feature of the rules of the mystic literalist language game(s) that these beings can possess sense perceptible forms.[35]

Summing up this foregoing analysis of the conflict between the mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists, the grounds and criteria for disagreement and debate between them should now be carefully circumscribed.

Questions of what is possible or necessary, true or false, or meaningful are, to use Carnap's phrase, "internal" questions about

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[35]In Chapter 7 of God and Timelessness, Nelson Pike argues that if God is to be thought of as a person with whom personal relationships can be established by other persons, then He cannot, as many theologians have thought, be attributed the property of timelessness. The mystic literalists' experiences of God, occurring at specific times and extended over specific temporal durations, tend to support Pike's argument and indicate that it is best not to regard timelessness as an essential attribute of God but as a conceptual-schema-relative property of God, correctly attributable to Him only on the conceptual schema of the non-mystic-literalists or some subset thereof.

conceptual schemas.[36] They are questions which can only be intelligibly raised from within the conceptual structure of a particular conceptual schema since their form presupposes the conceptual structure of the correspondent language game. Thus whereas it would be unintentionally contradictory for post-Copernican astronomers to suppose, within the language games of pre-Copernican western astronomers, that possible change might occur in the heavens, and it is baldly unintelligible to talk about perceiving airplanes within the language game of the primitive aborigine not possessing the concept of "airplane," it is perfectly ordinary for the post-Copernican western astronomers to which Kuhn alludes to discuss change in the heavens and unexceptional for modern western men to talk about their perceptions of airplanes. The justification for answers to internal questions can be of two sorts. The justification can be logical--in accordance with the rules of the relevant language games--as it is for questions concerning what is logically (and sometimes causally) necessary or possible or for questions concerning matters of meaning. Or, the justification can be empirical--and consistent with the rules of the relevant language game--as it is in some questions involving the causal modalities and in matters of truth and falsity.

On the other hand, considerations of pragmatic expediency used to evaluate and choose between conceptual structures of conceptual schemas are "external": they are meta-considerations directed at but from outside of the conceptual structure of the conceptual schema subset(s) in question. (Notice that these external considera-

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[36]Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology," p. 209.

tions must follow the strictures on conceptual structure of some conceptual schema subset(s), though not the conceptual structure of the conceptual schema subset which they are used to evaluate.)

Mystic literalists and non-mystic-literalists, just like, for example, the pre- and post-Copernican astronomers, cannot from their own point of view intelligibly charge that their opponents make assertions which are inconsistent, false, or meaningless (or nonsensical)--though of course they can make these charges about their opponents' assertions from within the rules of the language games which their opponents profess to use. Each side can, however, fruitfully adduce the wide spectrum of alleged experiences plus such considerations as self-consistency and parsimony to argue that their own conceptual schema subsets and correspondent language games are the more epistemically powerful and suitable for acting in the world, involve the more parsimonious set of concepts and the simpler logical structure, most perspicuously solve what are taken to be the most significant problems, and coherently order and explain the widest variety and quantity of alleged types of experience. Fruitful debate of this sort between groups possessing differing conceptual schemas will clearly be successful in proportion to the degree of agreement between the two groups as to what constitutes the greater parsimony, what are the most significant problems for the rival conceptual schemas to best explain and what are the phenomenological "facts" of the experiences in question. If the logical structure of the opposing conceptual schemas differs enough, agreement on questions of this kind will fail and attampts at reconciliation between the opponents will reach an impasse.

The "real" is a conceptual-schema-relative notion. Whether there are $\underline{x}$'s and whether $\underline{x}$'s are $\underline{G}$'s--e.g. physical phenomena, hallucinatory, dream or imaginary entities--is determined by the conceptual structure of each percipient's conceptual schema. When we talk about the "real world" we refer to what is logically possible and causally possible and actual. The two modalities here are both conceptual schema relative, limiting the "possible" in accordance with the conceptual structure of one's conceptual schema. This alone makes what is contingently true in large measure relative to a conceptual schema. And indeed we have seen that the contingently true is true relative to a particular set of conceptual schemas whose logical structures do not preclude the truth of the contingent state of affairs. In an important sense, then, groups with different conceptual schemas will, with respect to certain features of their "worlds," often live in different "worlds." (Though the intersection of their worlds, like the intersection of the conceptual schema subsets of their conceptual schemas, may be exceedingly large.) This is why accessibility between different universes is definable in terms of the limits of conception of a particular conceiver: conceivers possessing conceptual schemas which differ in the relevant respects will not possess powers of conception which, contradictorily, entail the accessibility, regarding a particular statement, of different universes, since they will not be members of the same universe.

Yet the world is, for the most part, objective and public and we feel that we (usually) agree with most of those with whom we associate that we live in the same world. This demonstrates the potency of shared innate dispositions to acquire similar conceptual

structures--similar conceptual schema subsets--within our conceptual schemas, shared language games, similar experiences, and the pragmatic drive for facile communication with our fellow percipients. Moreover, not only do our conceptual schemas develop together and alter to meet recalcitrant experiences of others as well as of ourselves, but we generally share, as part of the conceptual structure of our conceptual schemas, the notion that there is one world, one reality. This world might be thought to be best characterized as the "world" which an omniscient being would consider to be the "real world" (assuming that all omniscient beings would be in agreement). But whether we agree on which conceptual-schema-relative possible world is the "real world" depends on our willingness to change subsets of our conceptual schemas to achieve that agreement.

Neither the mystic literalists nor the non-mystic-literalists are without qualification right or wrong about which universe is the actual universe: neither can be said to be right or wrong, apart from the specification of within which language game this assessment is made, about whether or not God and angels are literally sensibly perceived or even sense perceptible. For instance, it is no more bizarre for the mystic literalist, within his language games, to claim to sensibly perceive God than it is for us to claim to perceive tables and chairs. For us, the concepts of tables and chairs and the general "myth" of physical objects has proved epistemologically expedient in ordering the "booming, buzzing confusion" of the output of our physiological sense-reception processes. Perhaps the myth that God and angels possess proper sense-perceptible forms is the epistemologically superior. The judgment as to which group of percipients holds the

more pragmatically expedient position, possesses the more pragmatically expedient conceptual schema, would be an immensely difficult undertaking--far beyond the attempt in this essay to analyze the logic of perception involved in each and thereby render each intelligible in its own right as well as demonstrating their mutual intelligibility.

V

One of the most frequent purported features of mystical experiences is a total or partial ineffability. For example, in The Vision of God, K. E. Kirk cites this experience of a Hellenistic Jew around the first century A.D.:

> I saw the appearance of the Lord's face . . . like iron made to glow in fire, and brought out, emitting sparks--and it burns. Thus I saw the Lord's face; but the Lord's face is ineffable, marvellous and very awful, and very, very terrible; and who am I to tell of the Lord's unspeakable being, and of His very wonderful face?[37]

How could the perceived features in a vision be ineffable? If the reputed perceptual experience is genuine, then the content of the experience will, on the view argued for in this essay, consist in a set of propositional episodes. If the form of these occurrent awarenesses is propositional, then why would they not be verbalizable? Mystics' claims of the ineffability of their experiences are not for the most part claims that they have forgotten the details of the experience. Why would the perceived features of the experience not be verbalizable given that they are remembered?

In Mysticism and Philosophy, Walter Stace explains the claimed

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[37]Kirk, The Vision of God, p. 16.

ineffability of mystical experiences by suggesting that the mystic says of his experiences that "it is x" and "it is not-x" and that:

> The language which he [the mystic] finds himself compelled to use is, when at its best, the literal truth about his experience, but it is contradictory. This is the root of his feeling of embarrassment with language . . . the words come from his mouth, but he is astonished and perplexed to find himself talking in contradictions. He explains this to himself by supposing that there is something wrong with the language. He says that his experience is ineffable.
>
> He is in fact mistaken. . . . the language is only paradoxical because the experience is paradoxical.[38]

I think that Stace has here correctly isolated at least one way to make intelligible the mystics' claim that perceived features in their experiences are ineffable, but that he misdescribes both the sort of "ineffability" and the nature of contradiction involved in such experiences when he describes them as paradoxical.

It seems to me that a mystic may well retreat into saying that his experiences are ineffable and the objects of his experiences "incomprehensible" when his experiences are such that he feels compelled to describe them as being both x and not-x. Consider the statement of the Hellenistic Jew cited above. He says that he sees the Lord's face, describes what he sees, and then declares, "who am I to tell of the Lord's unspeakable being, and of His very wonderful face?" He seems to hold the view that God's face is ineffable and, no doubt, is not perceivable--yet he perceives God's face, or so it seems in his experience. I think that this and other instances when the mystic is inclined to express his experiences in contradictory terms could result from an attempt to use the conceptual structures of two contra-

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[38]Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, pp. 304-305.

dictory conceptual schemas at the same time. A non-mystic-literalist who had apparent sense perceptions of God or of an angel would use contradictory language if he tried to describe the prima facie appearance of his experience at the same time as he expressed his beliefs about the sense imperceptibility of these beings. (And, I suppose that such contradictory language resulting from the use of the conceptual structures of two contradictory conceptual schemas at the same time would be most likely to occur during the transition period if the percipient was altering his conceptual schema from the one to the other set of relevant conceptual schema subsets.)

Stace says of contradictory mystical statements that "it is possible to use concepts correctly [i.e. use "is x" and "is not-x" to describe the same experience] and yet to disobey the laws of logic" and that ". . . the experience is paradoxical. Thus the language correctly mirrors the experience."[39] I think that Stace is wrong to suggest that language can be correctly mirroring a mystical experience when the experience is described as "x and not-x" and that such a description can be correct despite the fact that it "disobeys the laws of logic."

I have argued that (at least) the law of non-contradiction is a logically necessary truth in the strong sense. An apparent statement that expresses that something is both x and not-x would not be a well-formed statement and a correct use of language on the supposition that it "correctly mirrors the experience." For, of course if the statement, call it S, "It is both the case that x and not-x," is true,

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[39]Ibid.

then the law of non-contradiction is false and not-S can also be true: hence, it would be self-stultifying to assert S.

Furthermore, it is not paradoxical to describe an experience as "x and not-x"; an (apparent) description of this sort is either simply logically contradictory or it is nonsensical (and is only a set of words mascarading as a meaningful description). If a mystic who describes his experiences in this manner is attempting to use the conceptual structures of two conceptual schemas at the same time to describe his experience, then his experience will be ineffable for the language game which he is using and he will just end up stating logical contradictions. For it is impossible to correctly use a language game, L, to express experiences which would be ordered by two contradictory conceptual schemas, one of which corresponds to L. It is impossible to correctly use L in this way because a language game can only be meaningfully used as long as one adheres to the logic of that language game given the meaning rules of that language game, the law of non-contradiction, etc. On the other hand, if the mystic is not in fact attempting to use the conceptual structures of two contradictory conceptual schemas at once, then it is just nonsense for him to describe his experiences as "x and not-x." For in this case, he will either be deviating from the syntactical rules of the language game which he intends to use or he will be using meaningless expressions with the appearance of a proper use of syntax.

Turn now to another puzzling feature of visions. In "Visions," Alasdair MacIntyre says that:

> If from premisses reporting a vision we could infer ontological conclusions, the occurrence of rival visions would validate mutually exclusive ontologies. On visions of the

> Blessed Virgin some Roman Catholics have based beliefs about her present status and works. From visions of Krishna Hindus construct a theology which, if true, invalidates Roman Catholicism. We may note in passing that it is almost always Roman Catholics who have visions of the Virgin and almost always Hindus who have visions of Krishna and extraordinarily rarely, if ever, vice versa. . . . if there is to be a valid place in religion for visionary experience, it must be understood other than as evidence for belief.[40]

In their visions, mystics tend to perceive entities which accord with their expectations and which are religion specific to their own religion. Here MacIntyre suggests that, given that fact, visionary experiences should not be used as an evidential basis for religious belief, since they would then validate contrary ontologies.

Were x-visions taken to be visions of x's, rival ontologies would be supported. However, from the foregoing considerations of instances in which mutually inconsistent conceptual schemas produce mutually incompatible or mutually inconsistent perceptions for the percipients possessing those conceptual schemas, we can conclude two things regarding MacIntyre's position. First, even though different and even inconsistent ontologies are supported by the mystics' beliefs that their x-visions are visions of x's, this does not mean that those visions cannot provide any evidence for those different ontologies. Secondly, not only is it expectable that the evidence of the visions of different mystics will tend to support different ontologies, but there is a sense in which any two such different ontologies could both be correct.

Consider two beings, or two states of affairs, X and Y, and

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[40] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Visions," in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, eds. Anthony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (New York, 1964), p. 260. Bertrand Russell makes a similar statement in Religion and Science, p. 180.

two religious discourses, $\underline{R}_1$ and $\underline{R}_2$ such that $\underline{X}$ is accorded an important religious status in $\underline{R}_1$ and $\underline{Y}$ an important religious status in $\underline{R}_2$, and $\underline{X}$ and $\underline{Y}$ are mutually incompatible or mutually inconsistent. Now, a mystic who uses $\underline{R}_1$ may, given his conceptual schema, tend to see $\underline{X}$ in his visions, while a second mystic, who uses $\underline{R}_2$, may, given his conceptual schema, tend to see $\underline{Y}$ in his visions.

Suppose both mystics take their respective $\underline{X}$-visions and $\underline{Y}$-visions to be, respectively, visions of $\underline{X}$ and visions of $\underline{Y}$. For the first mystic, within his language game of $\underline{R}_1$, it may be a conceptual-schema-relative truth that he has visions of $\underline{X}$. Within the second mystic's language game of $\underline{R}_2$ it may be a conceptual-schema-relative truth that he sees visions of $\underline{Y}$. (Of course, just because they take their visions to be visions of $\underline{x}$'s and not just $\underline{x}$-visions does not mean that they are visions of $\underline{x}$'s.) For the members of each religious community possessing a conceptual schema which corresponds, respectively, to $\underline{R}_1$ or $\underline{R}_2$, there is no possible experience, in the narrow sense, of the entity which the mystic from the other community claims to experience. But that is just to say that for the members of each religious community, given their conceptual schema subsets of religion and perception, the claimed experience, and the ontological facts it is believed to support, of the mystic from the other community is in the weak sense necessarily false: in itself this does not impugn the religious experience, beliefs, or ontology of either community. Because of the radical conceptualization of experience, mystics like any percipients will tend to perceive entities which accord with the expectations, dispositions to make certain inferences, concepts, etc. which are part of the conceptual structure of their conceptual schemas

and their perceptions, like all perceptual experience, are some evidence that they perceive what they seem to perceive. The perceptions of the pre- and post-Copernicans, when regarded as veridical, tend to support mutually exclusive ontologies about the mutability or immutability of the heavens. Still, both the pre- and the post-Copernicans' perceptual experiences are some evidence for their respective beliefs about the heavens.

Further, neither of these two mystics using, respectively, R_1 and R_2, can charge the other with uttering nonsense. For nonsense occurs within a language game when the speaker deviates from the syntax or semantics of that language game but intends his statements to be judged by the rules of that language game. Also, the expressions of the one mystic are identifiably logically inconsistent, and hence not nonsense, from within the rules of the language game of the other mystic.

Lastly, neither is there a logical contradiction between the perceptual claims or the ontologies of the users of R_1 and R_2 nor can the perceptual claims or ontologies of either be judged right or wrong apart from the logical structure of their own language games since these are "internal" questions which can only be intelligibly raised from within the conceptual structure of a particular conceptual schema. However, as in the altercation between the mystic literalists and the non-mystic-literalists, both sides can fruitfully argue about such matters as which of their language games, and which of their corresponding conceptual schema subsets, is the epistemically more powerful and suitable for acting in the world, which is the more parsimonious in conceptual structure, which accounts for more signi-

ficant and greater variety of the experiences which each group purports to have and which solves what are taken to be the most significant problems of their perceptual experience and ontologies.

VI

Focus now on the altercation between the mystic literalists and the users of ordinary theological religious discourse as well as on that between members of different religious communities who believe in and whose mystical experiences tend to support mutually contradictory ontologies. Of course, the result of a discussion about the pragmatic superiority of their conceptual schemas might well be that both the mystic literalists and the non-mystic-literalists, and both groups from different religious traditions believing in mutually contradictory ontologies, remain convinced that their own conceptual schema is pragmatically superior to that of the other: neither group being able to convince the other that it was wrong if they recognize that charges of logical contradiction, nonsense, or that their disagreement was merely verbal could not be correctly used by either.

One other possibility remains open. Several possible conceptual schemas will be subsumable under another, "supervenient," conceptual schema such that the set of conceptual-schema-relative possible universes of the supervenient conceptual schema includes all the members of the sets of conceptual-schema-relative possible universes of the subsumed conceptual schemas.

This notion of supervenient conceptual schemas is elucidated by a feature of those sets of self-consistent possible universes

which comprise all of the conceptual-schema-relative possible universes relative to some particular conceptual schema, and such that a statement, S, is true in all of those conceptual-schema-relative possible universes. The relationship between the members of each such set of conceptual-schema-relative possible universes was defined in terms of accessibility. U_2 was defined as accessible to U_1 if U_2 is conceptual-schema-relative possible on the conceptual schema of a percipient, P_1, for whom U_1 is the actual universe, the logical structure of whose conceptual schema entails the logical necessity of a statement, S, which expresses a proposition which is true in U_2. U_2's conceptual-schema-relative possibility relative to P_1's conceptual schema was defined as the conceivability for P_1 of any part of the complete description of U_2 including the conceptual structure of the conceptual schema of any percipient in U_2. On that definition, accessibility is a transitive relation since if any conceiver in U_2 is able to conceive of U_3, then P_1 in U_1 can conceive of U_3. However, accessibility will not be symmetrical since while P_1 in U_1 may be able to conceive of U_2, a conceiver, P_2, in U_2 may lack certain concepts in his conceptual schema such that he cannot conceive of certain features of, and hence cannot conceive of, U_1. In that case, P_1's conceptual schema will be supervenient over P_2's conceptual schema: supervenience is therefore definable in terms of a non-symmetricality yet transitivity between conceptual schemas.

A supervenient conceptual schema might contain rules for what would be the appropriate circumstances in which it would be pragmatically expedient to use each of the sets of language games correspondent to each of the conceptual schemas subsumed under it. This

would be similar to the manner in which the theory of relativity can be thought of as supervenient over the Euclidean notion of space and Newtonian physics and as showing when, as well as why, it is epistemically expedient for us to conceive of space in Euclidean terms and to use Newtonian physics in ordinary situations. Thus, the use of Euclidean space and Newtonian physics does not conflict with an Einsteinian conception except where the former are claimed to be applicable at high relative velocities.

Perhaps the users of mystic literalist or the users of non-mystic-literalist language games, or one or the other of the groups from different religious traditions who believe in and whose mystical experiences tend to support mutually contradictory ontologies, could alter subsets of their conceptual schema sufficiently to make it supervenient in this manner so as to account for the logic of both of their conceptual schemas as well as to offer a pragmatically satisfactory account of the experiences of the two groups.